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**Multilingual Couples' Disagreement - Taiwanese Partners  
and Their Foreign Spouses**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the Department of Applied Linguistics

Birkbeck College

University of London

London, February 2014

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of Applied Linguistics, Birkbeck College, University of London is solely my own work and effort, and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award.

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Date: 8 February, 2014

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates oppositional stance-taking between multilingual couples through analysing discourse strategies from a sociocultural perspective. It is based on the naturally-occurring conversations of twenty-one Taiwanese participants and their foreign spouses, and aims at providing a better understanding of how different strategies are deployed to mitigate or intensify their propositions in disagreement contexts. Through a detailed interactional sociolinguistics analysis of the negotiation between the couples, it is demonstrated that disagreement cultivates the intimate relationship between participants from different languages and cultures. Discourse strategies, such as vocatives, the discourse marker *well*, apology and complaint can be used to indicate upcoming oppositions, whereas questioning, swearing, reference to nationality, humour, and indirectness are used to maintain the disagreement. I employ the theory of stance-taking as a framework to elucidate how numerous discourse strategies are related to disagreement. A sequential analysis of stances demonstrates that multilingual intercultural couples may choose different languages to index their identities, attitudes, and beliefs and highlight disagreement. Code-switching functions as one of the most readily available strategies that the couples draw on to express their affective and epistemic stances, which strengthens the salience of constructing and negotiating their oppositions during the interaction. It argues that disagreement strategies are highly idiosyncratic rather than culture-specific. The fact that multilingual couples' disagreement commonly terminates without consensus supports the main argument that sustaining oppositional stances does not damage their relationship.

## **Table of Contents**

Declaration	i
Acknowledgments	1
Abstract	2
Table of Contents	3
List of Tables and Figures	9
Transcription Conventions	10
1. Chapter 1. Introduction	12
1.1 Introduction	12
1.2 Background of the Study	12
1.3 Rationale behind the Study	13
1.3.1 Why Study Disagreement?	13
1.3.2 Why Study multilingual Couples?	15
1.4 Objectives of the Thesis	15
1.4.1 Research Questions	16
1.5 Structure of the Study	17
2. Chapter 2. Previous Research and Theories	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Research on Bilingual Couples	19
2.2.1 Language Choice and Proficiency	20
2.3 Stance-taking	24
2.3.1 Definition of Stance Terms	24
2.3.2 Sociolinguistic Approaches to Stance	26
2.3.3 Stancetaking and Disagreement	29

2.4	Disagreement	31
2.4.1	Disagreement in Intimate Relationship	32
2.4.2	Terminology of Disagreement	34
2.4.3	Structure of Disagreement	37
2.4.4	Resolution of Disagreement	39
2.5	Discourse Strategies in Disagreement	40
2.5.1	Definition of Discourse Strategies	40
2.5.2	Code-Switching in Family's Communication	42
2.5.3	Vocatives in Multilingual Couples' Disagreement	49
2.5.4	Topic Raising and Shift	52
2.5.5	Questions as Challenge	53
2.5.6	Silence	55
2.5.7	Humour	57
2.5.8	Apology	60
2.5.9	Discourse Markers	62
2.5.10	Directness /Indirectness, Swear Words and Gender	66
2.6	Research Questions Revisited	73
2.7	Summary	75
3.	Chapter 3 Methodology and Couples' Profiles	76
3.1	Introduction	76
3.2	Rationale behind the Methodology	77
3.3	Data Collection	79
3.3.1	Survey	79
3.3.2	Questionnaire	82
3.3.3	Naturally-occurring Conversation	84

3.3.4 Ethical Considerations	85
3.4 Approach the Couples and Pilot Study	86
3.4.1 Approaching the Couples	86
3.4.2 Pilot Study	88
3.5 Interactional Sociolinguistics	90
3.5.1 Translation of the Multilingual Conversations	92
3.5.2 Procedures and Rationales for Data Selection	93
3.5.3 Method of Classifying Discourse Strategies	94
3.6 The couples	96
3.6.1 Couples' Profiles	96
3.7 Summary	102
 4. Chapter 4. Initiate and Maintain Disagreement	 104
4.1 Introduction	104
4.2 Initiating Disagreement	105
4.2.1 Vocatives	105
4.2.2 Discourse marker <i>well</i>	123
4.2.3 Apology	137
4.2.4 Complaint	142
4.3 Maintaining Disagreement	150
4.3.1 Questioning as Aggravated Disagreement Strategy	150
4.3.2 Swearing as Aggravated Disagreement Strategy	162
4.3.3 Reference to Nationality as Aggravated Disagreement Strategy	180
4.3.4 Reference to Nationality as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy	186
4.3.5 Humour as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy	193
4.3.6 Vocatives as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy	200



4.3.7 Indirectness as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy	204
4.4 Summary	209
 5. Chapter 5. Code-Switching and Oppositional Stances	 212
5.1 Introduction	212
5.2 Language Choice	212
5.2.1 We Speak English Only	215
5.2.2 Chinese as the Main Code	217
5.2.3 Mixed Code	217
5.2.4 Intra-personal and Inter-personal Factors	220
5.3 CS and Affective Stance-taking	223
5.4 CS and Epistemic Stance-taking	240
5.5 CS and Mixed Stance-taking	255
5.6 Summary	263
 6. Chapter 6. Resolution of disagreement	 266
6.1 Introduction	266
6.2 Termination of Disagreement Overview	266
6.3 Withdrawal	270
6.4 Dominant Third-party Intervention	273
6.5 Compromise	277
6.6 Submission	281
6.7 Stand-off	286
6.7.1 General Opposition	286
6.7.2 Affective Act	288
6.7.3 Concession Offer- Reject	293

6.7.4 Humour	296
6.7.5 Silence	299
6.8 Topic Shift	303
6.9 Summary	309
 7. Chapter 7 Topics, Gender and Cultural Identities in Disagreement	 310
7.1 Introduction	310
7.2 Stancetaking Triangle in Couples' Disagreement	310
7.3 Topics of Couples' Disagreement	315
7.3.1 Child-related Topics	319
7.3.2 Food related Topics	323
7.3.3 Money-related Topics	328
7.3.4 Choosing Topic as a Topic	330
7.4 Performing gender in Disagreement	333
7.4.1 Gender Difference of Using Vocatives, Apology and DM <i>well</i>	334
7.4.2 Gender Difference of Questioning and Swear Word	336
7.4.3 Gender Difference of Terminating Disagreement	338
7.5 Identities in Disagreement	341
7.6 Summary	345
 8. Chapter 8. Conclusions	 346
8.1 Introduction	346
8.2 Summary of Findings and Arguments	347
8.2.1 Results of the Study	347
8.2.2 Findings and Arguments	349

8.2.3 Codes in Oppositional Stance-taking	354
8.3 Contribution and Implications	356
8.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research	358
Appendices :	
Questionnaire	361
Couples' Profile	363
UK	363
Taiwan	372
Bibliography	382

## List of Tables and Figures

Figure 2-1 Functions of vocatives	50
Figure 3-1 The ratio of national and international marriage in Taiwan	80
Figure 3-2 Number of foreign spouses according to nations in Taiwan (2012)	80
Figure 3-3 Number of foreign spouses in UK (2009)	81
Table 3-1 The discourse strategies in three stages of disagreement	95
Table 3-2 Couples' profiles	97
Table 3-3 Couples' perceptions of disagreement when their partners use other languages (Lx)	99
Table 3-4 Couples' identities	101
Table 4-1 Functions and numbers of occurrence of vocatives in couples' disagreement	106
Table 4-2 Number of occurrences of well in multilingual couples' disagreement	124
Table 4-3 Swear words in multilingual couples' disagreement	163
Table 5-1 The language choices in the multilingual couple domain	213
Table 5-2 Fanny's stance and CS	230
Table 5-3 Pisces' stance and CS	237
Table 5-4 Steven' epistemic stance and CS	247
Table 5-5 Ali' epistemic stance and CS	253
Table 5-6 Maria's mixed stances and CS	257
Table 5-7 Paola's mixed stances and CS	260
Table 5-8 Interrogation stances and language choice	262
Table 6-1 Numbers of episodes in 6 formats of disagreement resolution	268
Figure 6-1 The process of resolving multilingual couples' disagreement	269
Figure 7-1 Couples' oppositional stance triangle	311
Figure 7-2 Common topics of multilingual couples' disagreement	317
Table 7-1 Use of vocatives in disagreement by gender	334
Table 7-2 Use of questioning and swearing in disagreement by gender	336
Table 7-3 Resolution of disagreement by gender	339
Table 7-4 Strategies of maintaining oppositions by gender	339
Table 7-5 National identities in disagreement	341
Table 8-1 Couples' stances and code choices (1)	355
Table 8-2 Couples' stances and code choices (2)	356
Table 8-3 Couples' stances and code choices (3)	356

## Transcription conventions

> < – accelerando (speeding up)

< > – ritardando (slowing down)

◦ ◦ – progressively softer in volume

**CAP** – louder in volume

- one hyphen – elongation of preceding vowel sound

^ – intonation pitch

... – half second pause (each extra dot = another 1/2 second)

.. – perceptible pause of less than half a second

(2.5) – measured pause of 2.5 seconds

□ – square bracket to the left of two consecutive lines indicates

┌ overlapping speech, two speakers talking at once

【xxx】 – translation

, – comma at end of line – continuing intonation ( ‘more to come’ )

. – period at end of line – sentence final falling intonation

? – question mark at end of line – sentence final rising intonation, ‘appeal intonation’

! – exclamation mark at end of line – sentence final exclamatory intonation

# # – transcription impossible

@ @ – laugh pause

= – indicates latching

wor:d – lag

wor- – cut off word

(° H) – breathe in

(tsk) – click

(SNIFF) – vocalism

(words) – added translation

*italic* – a different language (來這套)

The font size of transcriptions is 10 to distinguish from the main texts.

# **1. Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis examines oppositional stance-taking between multilingual couples, through analysing discourse strategies from a sociolinguistic perspective. Emphasis is placed on how couples with different languages and cultural backgrounds maintain intimate relationship through disagreement. In order to understand such talk in interaction, the study takes a sociolinguistic approach to investigate how the communication is performed on the linguistic and cultural levels. The participants are bi/multilingual couples consisting of one Taiwanese national, and their foreign partners either living in the United Kingdom or in Taiwan.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The research about bilingual couples' talk is justified by the fact that people who speak two languages or more in family communication, which is intercultural communication, are not a negligible minority, but a group with a growing number (Piller, 2002). Cultures cannot simply be reduced to nationality, nor to a language community, given that people simultaneously belong to several cultures and can change their memberships (Kotthoff & Spencer-Oatey, 2007). When the term 'intercultural' is used, I am aware that the boundaries between one culture and another cannot be clearly drawn. According to the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of the Interior in Taiwan, in the year 2012, the number of international marriages was 7,887, which is equivalent to 5.5% of the total marriages. The report of the UK Office

for National Statistics indicates that the Chinese immigrant population reached 210,000 in the year 2010. Both Taiwan and the UK represent multilingual societies with a growing number of international marriages.

A search for a combination of ‘conflict talk’, ‘couple’ and ‘bilingual’ in the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA) database from 1990 to 2013 returns the result of ‘none’. The result for ‘family disagreement’ from the same period is 31 articles/books whereas 43 are found for ‘intermarriage’, and for ‘bilingual couple’ there are 34 results. There are other relevant keywords, such as ‘exogamy’ (29), ‘interethnic couples’ (4), and ‘couplehood’ (2). The low numbers indicate the need for more investigation on the issue of disagreement in the family domain regarding linguistic performance. It also shows that there have been comparatively less linguistic studies on couples who are coming from different national backgrounds, or studies regarding disagreement in the private domain. I will provide additional reasons for the need to conduct such research in the following section.

## **1.3 Rationale behind the Study**

### ***1.3.1 Why Study Disagreement?***

Throughout the thesis, the term “disagreement”<sup>1</sup> will be used, except where other notions occur in the relevant literature, in which scholars employ different terminology. Allen Grimshaw (1990) describes conflict talk as being “so deeply implicated in every dimension of human social life” that it would be possible to identify dozens of reasons why it should be studied (p. 3). I will summarise his

---

<sup>1</sup> Definitions and further discussion of the terminology can be found in Section 2.4.



reasons for why conflict should be the focus of systematic inquiry here: conflict study can (1) lead to more refined and better-documented understanding of the sociological dimension of social conflict as a process, (2) be incorporated into humanistic studies, such as social science or literature disciplines, (3) improve theoretical understanding and empirical knowledge of specific substantive areas, such as race and ethnic relations, child and adolescent socialisation, etc., (4) ameliorate social problems on the interpersonal, intra-institutional, community, and international level (Grimshaw, 1990). The reasons provided above also account for why disagreement needs to be studied further given that disagreement is the essential component of conflict talk.

In real life, shared understandings occur only occasionally, while communication breakdowns are more likely to be noticed (Tannen, 1984). Communication difficulties or breakdowns are seen as the main cause of marital failure in modern postindustrial societies (Fitzpatrick, 1990). Communication researchers and psychologists have paid great attention to family conflict resolutions whereas in linguistics studies, the work did not begin until a decade ago. Experiencing interpersonal conflict is a ubiquitous phenomenon, and even people in the same speech situation and from similar background might have different levels of tolerance for breaches of norms (Locher, 2004). The study of the private dimension between two individuals is important particularly when family communication involves intercultural communication. Most of the earlier disagreement studies centre on comparing the use of disagreement in two or more languages or within the same language, but none of them has previously investigated intercultural disagreement (Habib, 2008).

### **1.3.2 Why Study Multilingual Couples?**

First, the idea that social identities can be constructed in a private context provides the justification for studying multilingual couples, given that the relations between native and non-native speakers, between men and women, or father and mother, and between natives and foreigners all shape and are negotiated into this specific couplehood (Piller, 2002). Deborah Tannen's success through her self-help books<sup>2</sup> proves the influence of intimate communication on a general audience. However, her work has been criticised for not being of an academic standard. As such, instead of marginalising couplehood research, there is a need for further studies on linguistic practices, which are essential to contemporary intermarriage. Secondly, the strong focus of studies on family interaction which has been on child development and learning or parent-child interaction limits bilingualism research (Piller, 2002). Research focusing on disagreement between intermarried couples is an under-explored field in linguistics. Studying conversations of multilingual couples will therefore assist in bridging the current gaps in our knowledge.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Thesis**

The overall aim of this thesis is to expose the existing gap in the linguistic field, and the limits of analysis possible on the basis of current research, providing new perspectives for multilingual intercultural conversations in disagreement. I attempt to incorporate the spoken discourse with written transcriptions of the data, through establishing a corpus for the extension of the current empirical database. By doing so,

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<sup>2</sup> The titles of Tannen's bestsellers are *You just don't understand: women and men in conversation*. (1992); and *That's not what I meant!: How conversational style makes or breaks relationships*. (1992).

the naturally-occurring conversations can compensate for the widely used methodology of questionnaires and interviews which have severely limited the questions that could be asked. The theoretical contribution is made through suggesting the theory of stance-taking as a framework to explain how couples' disagreement is related to a certain set of discourse strategies, which has not been previously applied. Lastly, the study addresses the goals mentioned above, and attempts to provide a better understanding of multilingual couples' interaction in disagreement contexts through a microanalysis of the sequential construction of turns.

#### ***1.4.1 Research Questions***

The research questions posed in the thesis address the research aims by exploring what is going on through naturally occurring conversations of multilingual intercultural couples' disagreement. As such, the gap in the linguistic research on intercultural communication between multilingual couples can be filled. Secondly, this thesis introduces the notion of stance, provided by Alexandra Jaffe (2007, 2009), to the field of multilingual couples' disagreement. Using the framework of stance-taking allows for analysing different strategies with regard to participants' propositions, either agreement or disagreement. However, the analysis should first empirically demonstrate and find out which languages speakers share with their intimate partners. Two research questions are identified below and they will be elaborated further in the following section on literature review.

1. How do multilingual couples from different cultures disagree in a way that will cultivate, or at least not damage their relationship?

Whether disagreement leads to conflict in intimate relationship of multilingual

couples is the question addressed. Can expressions be perceived differently in different languages and cultures in a disagreement context?

2. What means can multilingual couples employ to negotiate oppositional stances?

By investigating the discourse strategies that multilingual couples employ, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of how disagreement begins, maintains, and resolves with respect to the partners' intimate relationship.

## **1.5 Structure of the Study**

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2 will review relevant literature and provide an overview of the concepts which will be used in the data analysis. I will first discuss studies on bilingual couples, stance theory, and disagreement among family and friends. The structure of disagreement and the terminology will be clarified. Then the focus will be placed on discourse strategies that are found in the corpus, namely code-switching, vocatives, the discourse marker *well*, questioning, topic shifts, silence, humour, apology, swearing, and indirectness. Chapter 3 describes research methods as well as background information about the participants. Then the foci will switch to a detailed analysis of the negotiation between multilingual couples, through investigating how people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact during conversation. Data analysis and findings will be divided into three chapters from Chapters 4 to 6, concerning the beginning, the maintenance, and the ending stage of disagreement. The first part of Chapter 4 deals with how the disagreements emerge and what strategies can be used to signal the other interlocutors. In the second half of this chapter, two types of disagreement, aggravated and mitigated ones will be examined, in terms of the strategies used to maintain couples' oppositional stances. 21 episodes are analysed in the initial stage, and another 29

examples will demonstrate the management of sustaining the disagreement. Chapter 5 presents the phenomenon of code-switching, in concert with affective and epistemic stances in the oppositional context. A total of 22 extracts will be analysed in this chapter. Chapter 6 examines the termination strategies employed to resolve multilingual couples' disagreement. My analysis of extracts (75-101) is based on Vuchinich's five terminating formats of conflict: submission, dominant third-party intervention, compromise, stand-off, and withdrawal, as well as adding the 'topic shift' type to the previous classification. Chapter 7 is devoted to the topics, and discusses the gender and cultural identities constructed in the disagreement. I conclude with Chapter 8 which summarises the major findings and implications together with suggestions for future research and studies.

## **2. Chapter 2. Previous Research and Theories**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter includes the review of related literature and studies on bilingual couples, stance-taking, disagreement, and discourse strategies in multilingual couples' conversations. The first part of the chapter reviews bilingual couples' interaction followed by the concept of stance (Section 2.3). Section 2.4 focuses on family interaction in disagreement, and the definition of disagreement and closely related concepts will be provided. I will then devote Section 2.5 to a special segment of the research literature, namely discourse strategies, and draw attention to code-switching in particular (Section 2.5.2). Academic studies on discourse strategies have been carried out by a number of researchers, with a wide range of approaches and perspectives. In this thesis, the scope of discourse strategies will narrow down to those that are found in multilingual couple's disagreement: code-switching, topic shift, questioning, silence, humour, apology, discourse markers, gender, and indirectness. Finally, the research questions will be revisited in the last section.

### **2.2 Research on Bilingual Couples**

Numerous sociolinguistic studies have investigated interpersonal relationships. Pomerantz and Mandelbaum examine how participants rely on their assumptions and understanding regarding incumbents of particular relationship categories, through talking and acting, by conversation analytic approach (2005, p. 149). For instance, telling and taking up troubles or improprieties are activities that constitute moments of

intimacy and strong affiliation (*ibid*, p. 169). Bilingual couples' conversations are characterised by sharing knowledge and intimacy. However, linguistic research has a strong focal point on studies concerning children, rather than on couples (Piller, 2002, p. 28). Not until two decades ago, did research on bilingual couples begun to draw linguists' attention. The interests of studies on bilingual couples' research varies, including language contact, language proficiency, preference of language, language policy, language expertise, and humour in different languages, to name a few.

Chiaro (2009) explores the use of humour in bilingual couples' interaction, and suggests that participants hold a positive attitude toward their partners' culture by conducting questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Only when the partners partake in humorous discourse with his/her friends in their own languages, do spouses feel hostility or exclusion. The assumption is based on humorous talk as a form of collaboration between intercultural couples, and humour functions as a means to maintain or create harmony (*ibid*). Chiaro's conclusion seems persuasive; however, it does not address the issue of the strategic use of humour during interaction.

### **2.2.1      *Language Choice and Proficiency***

It is plausible to suggest that every couple argues in their marital relationship. As communication theorist Andrew Rancer points out, researchers have endeavored to examine the relationship between verbal aggressiveness and marital satisfaction (2006). The conflict likely results from the differences between individual socio-cultural values. For those couples who came from diverse nations, they benefit from the multilingual and multicultural environment on the one hand, but also entail the risk of misunderstanding in their marital relationship. Despite some discussions of

conflict in relationships, suggesting that less power wives would perceive their higher power husbands' behaviours more accurately, it is fundamental to note that the meaning of gender is socially and culturally constructed (Pavlenko, 2001; Acitelli, *et al.*, 2005). Piller adopts the concept of conflict as a rich point, which refers to an interesting problem for discussion. She maintains that "Arguing does not necessarily lead to a departure from the usual choice, but it may be the only time that participants ever think about their language choice" (2002, p. 153).

Language choice is the primary focus of the research on bilingual couples. Multilingual speakers can choose from a certain language variety to indicate their identities. Stanford's study (2007) focuses on the dialect contact and identity among the Sui clan in rural China through exploring the linguistic acts and features of exogamous immigrant Sui women, men and children. He suggests that married Sui women perform linguistic features, such as dialect resistance, to mark their identity that index and maintain their father's clan memberships. Ingrid Piller (2000, 2001, 2002) engages in language choice and negotiation of identity in the intermarriage domain with English-German spousal data. Piller's research presents several variables on what motivation the couples hold for their language choices. As exemplified by couples living in English-speaking countries, their preference in language choice corresponds to the majority language, whereas those in Germany do not necessarily reflect the language choice in the same way. The results demonstrate that a number of couples describe their language choice as mixed, which involves negative evaluations of language mixing, and leads them to justify their practice differently. It seems that the informants embrace a variety of reasons for code-switching, such as habit, compensation, or the favoured switch between the minority and majority languages. Similar research is carried out in the study of Filipino-Malaysian couples' language



choice, where English is found to be the preferred medium of communication at home and code switching is used by the couples to accommodate each other (Dumanig, 2010). Arguably, these cases are more likely to be individual-specific, rather than a universal pattern of language choice in intercultural multilingual marriages.

Lee (2005) investigates how asymmetrical linguistic proficiency and cultural differences come into play in Korean-English couples' partnerships, and concludes that the asymmetry places the bilingual wives in a subordinated position during dispute. The participants report that cultural differences trigger the main conflicts in their marriages. It may be challenged whether self-reports can be used as a reliable source. Jackson's research (2009) on a linguistically intermarried couple's communication is concerned more with their language policy in childrearing, and in his case study the language proficiency affects the power differentials in the marriage, and the cultural capital potentially derived from being the bilingual wife of an English-speaking husband. Tikigawa (2010) also studies an American husband and Japanese wife's conversation, but she emphasises the role language expertise plays in intercultural communication, and argues that neither the second language disfluency nor cultural backgrounds are the determinants for dispute.

Another important point is how couples identify themselves and couplehood in both private and public domains. I follow the "identity work in interaction" approach, and treat the term "identity" as how multilingual couples present themselves and construct which social groups they affiliate to in the interaction. The construction of identity in interaction can shape and be shaped by conversations to negotiate sameness and difference. In other words, social identities are associated with particular kinds of stance habitually and conventionally, as one of the subject positions (Jaffe, 2009).

Identity refers to a discursive construct that emerges in interaction, and it is a relational concept between self and other. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identity may be in part intentional, part habitual, and not fully conscious (*ibid*). The relation between identity and stance-taking, and between code-switching and identity will be discussed later in this chapter (Section 2.3 and 2.5). While the perception for the performance of common couple identity is positive, their discourse of national identity causes a threat to it. Differences based on national identities are oftentimes negatively stereotyped, and binational couples imagine themselves as belonging to different national groups which are mutually exclusive (Piller, 2002). The analysis of referring to national identities as a discourse strategy in disagreement will be discussed in Section 7.5. Piller's doing identity approach from a poststructuralist perspective can serve as a means to spell out the performance of identity, which is assumed to be a local construction that occurs in a particular community of practice (*ibid*, p. 11). Identities are products of multiple relations constructed through a variety of symbolic resources, such as language, ethnicity, gender, and race to understand self and others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Therefore, one can be wife, mother, honey, as well as her given names simultaneously. Damari (2010) interviews a Jewish-American / Israeli couple who build contrary identities to examine their linguistic strategies and how stances contribute to their identity construction. By demonstrating the couple's initial responses to questions with intertextual references to long-standing disagreements, rather than disagreeing with locally adjacent statements, she provides a contrary example to Schifffrin's model of camaraderie-building (1984, see Section 2.4.1). Before moving to how couples organise interaction of disagreement, it is necessary to examine an individual expression of their relationship to the interlocutor and conversation.

## 2.3 Stance-taking

### 2.3.1 *Definition of Stance Terms*

The concept of stance concerns the meanings and activities associated with this lexeme in everyday use, which serves as a window into how it has been appropriated by linguistic, social and interactional research (Englebretson, 2007, p. 4). Wu (2004) describes stance as the indication of speakers' affective or other position regarding what he or she knows about, or what has been addressed (p. 3). It is an emergent product which gains contour in the course of interaction and language provides a repertoire of devices for conveying a wide array of stances (*ibid*). Joseph (2003) points out that stance is not a grammaticalised form of evidentiality, but is related to information sources in terms of perspective and point of view. Jaffe (2009) defines stancetaking as a speaker taking up a position with respect to the form or the content of one's utterance (p. 3). She summarises different types of stancetaking in the literature, including evaluation, positioning, and the interconnection between them. Stance is generally understood according to its interactional nature, where "interactants create and signal the relationships with the propositions they utter and with the people they interact with" (Johnstone, 2009, p. 30).

#### *Affective stance and Epistemic Stance*

Stances are comprehended by two subgroups, namely epistemic stance and affective stance. Ochs (1996) provides a clear definition of the two types of stance, which are conceived as "central meaning components of social acts and social identities and that linguistic structures that index epistemic and affective stances are the basic linguistic

resources for constructing/realizing *social acts* and *social identities*” (p. 419-20, emphasis added). Affective stance refers to speakers’ mood, attitude, feeling, and disposition, and emotional intensity in relation to some focus of concern. Epistemic stance, on the other hand, refers to knowledge or belief, including degrees of certainty of knowledge, degrees of commitment to truth of propositions, and sources of knowledge, etc. (p. 410). Both affective and epistemic stances that represent speakers’ emotional states and convey speakers’ degrees of certainty about their propositions respectively are socially grounded and consequential (Jaffe, 2009).

### *Evaluation, Positioning, and Footing*

Issues concerning stance include evaluation, assessment, and evidentiality and stance is interpreted as orientations towards other interactants (Lempert, 2009, p. 225). Hunston and Thompson (2000) propose the functions of evaluation which can account for both speaker’s and hearer’s cognitive process by expressing the opinion of speaker with the proposition being expressed, manipulating relations between the hearer and the speaker, and organising the discourse. They consider evaluation as a broad term covering the speaker’s attitude or stance towards feeling or opinions about the propositions being taken (Johnstone, 2009). Stancetaking is subject to evaluation in terms of the degree of likeness or dislikeness (Agha, 2007). The act of stancetaking invokes an evaluation by assertion or inference (Du Bois, 2007). When the stancetaker evaluates an object, s/he positions the self and aligns with other subjects (*ibid*). Positioning is defined as “the act of situating a social actor with respect to responsibility for stance and for invoking sociocultural value” which subsumes both epistemic and affective stance (Du Bois, 2007, p. 143). All acts of evaluation are alignments or disalignments which engage in positioning, and positioning is central to

stancetaking (Jaffe, 2009). Shifts in positioning indicate strategic interactional moves (Ribeiro, 2006). Positioning reveals the resources individuals possess, and by taking up a position, the interactants associate themselves with social identities (Ribeiro, 2006; Jaffe, 2009).

Similar to positioning, footing is another interactive notion that helps us understand interactants' subtle shifts of alignment. Goffman (1981) develops the concept of footing as a persistently changing feature of natural talk, and as a framework to analyse linguistic cues and markers. Footing refers to participant's alignment, posture, projected self, or stance, and "a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (*ibid*, p. 128). Goffman suggests that interactants embed one footing within another, rather than simply change footing (Ribeiro, 2006). Conversely, footing can be seen as a position within a set of participant roles in an act of speaking (Irvine, 2009, p. 54). In sum, stance is the inventory of footings taken in the course of communication which would ultimately constitute positioning (Ribeiro, 2006; Jaffe, 2009).

### **2.3.2      *Sociolinguistic Approaches to Stance***

The concept of stance contributes an emphasis to points of view and action to bring several types and scales of analysis together through grammatical, interactional, cultural and sociological perspectives (Irvine, 2009). The term stance can be understood in the context of interaction under the principles of stancetaking, such as rational and indexical (Englebretson, 2007). Specific stances evoke larger aspects of the context and sociocultural systems in which they are embedded (*ibid*). Jaffe (2009)

explores a stance-based approach related to different concepts of analysis within sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. For Jaffe, sociolinguistic approaches concern how speakers draw on sociolinguistic resources and repertoires to present the self, to assert particular identities, to signal positions and so on (*ibid*, p. 10). Therefore, a sociolinguistics of stance plays a crucial role in theorising the relationship between acts of stance and the sociocultural field (*ibid*).

### *Style and Indexicality*

Style is a construct of sociolinguistic variation, a product of ideology posited by speakers, and variability has a role to play in the performance of the speaker's own social affiliations and identity (Eckert & Rickford, 2001; Agha, 2007). Recent scholars draw on the indexicality or contextually-bound meaning in the understanding of the stylistic practice, and focus on the interaction between socially recognised speech styles and personal style (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Bucholtz, 2009; Jaffe, 2009). Styles are part of a system of distinction and the principles and processes of stylistic differentiation within a continuously evolving sociolinguistic system are important from a sociolinguistic point of view (Irvine, 2001). Speakers select particular features to perform along a continuum of intensity and frequency, so styling can be seen as a form of stancetaking (Jaffe, 2009). Stance is a resource of style, and a personal style is built by repeating similar stances (Kiesling, 2009). Indexical connections between styles and identities are constructed through stance (Bucholtz, 2009; Kiesling, 2009). The relationship between stance, style and identity can be formed through the work of cultural ideologies (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identities encompass interactionally specific stances and participant's roles and stance can build up into larger identity categories (*ibid*). For instance, Jaffe's work (2009) on Corsican-French

bilingual school teacher's stancetaking and language choice focuses on the larger language ideologies and its relationship to the shaping of identities. Johnstone (2009) argues that repeated stancetaking can index personal repeatable styles rooted in a speaker's unique biography, rather than a fixed social identity. Kiesling also explores how stance is related to the sociolinguistic variation of styles and proposes that a speaker actively manages his or her habitual stancetaking in order to create a personal style (2009).

The second concept that helps to explain how people use linguistic variation in identity projection is indexicality. Indexicality is fundamental to the way speakers construct their identity positions through the choice of certain linguistic forms (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Ochs (1992) argues that the indexical connection between a linguistic form and social identity is not direct but associated with interactional stances. As a form of indirect indexicality, stance posits, presupposes, or proposes relationships that are related to the interpersonal, emergent, and co-constructed nature (Jaffe, 2009). A sociolinguistic approach to stance is distinguished by the processes of indexicalisation, but goes beyond the social and interpersonal (*ibid*).

### *Stance Triangle*

The process of stance-taking is dialogic as John Du Bois clearly demonstrates (2007). He proposes a conceptual framework, the "stance triangle", to analyse the process of stance, which he terms "an act of evaluation owned by a social actor" (*ibid*, p. 173). The act of stance (performing in the dialogic interaction), responsibility (ownership of taking a stance) and sociocultural value (what the stance is about) are all bound to a social actor with a name, a history, and an identity (*ibid*). Stance alignment in dialogic

interaction can be positive or negative, which indicates the possibility of agreement or disagreement between the interlocutors. According to Du Bois, the act of taking a stance involves an evaluation at a certain level through assertion or inference (p. 141).

Du Bois' stance triangle serves as a background for other research to some degree. For instance, in Bassiouney's study (2012) of Egyptian public discourse during the revolution, where she claims that the stancetaking process can be understood as a mean of identity construction. Damari (2010) examines a binational couple's stancetaking and their linguistic strategies of negotiating their identity work based on the stance triangle. Keisanen analyses challenges that are formatted as negative interrogatives and shows the collaborative nature of stancetaking in the sequential organisation of talk which also uses Du Bois' concept as a starting point (2007).

The previous subsections have offered an overview of the key themes regarding stance in the related literature. Stances are also required, attributed, and accumulated through an individual speakers' sequences of movement and constructed across personal histories of usages and repertoires (Jaffe, 2009). Stancetaking allows speakers to position themselves in terms of the discourse and their interlocutors, who in turn may positively or negatively align with the speaker's previous stances (Smith-Christmas, 2012). How stancetaking plays a role with respect to disagreement will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3.3      *Stancetaking and Disagreement***

When one person expresses an opinion, the interlocutor will often state his or her own viewpoint, which can be agreed or disagreed in response to the statement. How people



display affect, evaluation or doubt, and how they negotiate their points of view and positions are termed stancetaking, or in short — taking up a position with respect to the other's utterance (Keisanen, 2007; Jaffe, 2009). Stances present interactional identities when speakers align or disalign with one another by expressing agreement or disagreement with one another's propositions. (Mendoza-Denton, 1999). As such, who is talking about what, where the other stands and is headed, and in what condition the other interlocutor leaves the discussion are all significant.

Keisanen (2007) examines how people challenge the prior speaker by interrogatives (yes/no, tag questions) to argue that the stance embedded in the previous turn is problematic. Epistemicity is used to index participants' certainty or doubt toward information, either from their own turns or other's, by the interactional and linguistic means. Some tag questions display of the quality of affective, when speakers utter in high-rising final intonation. When facing disagreement, negative yes/no tag questions can be used to mitigate the epistemic strength of the interrogatives (*ibid*). Cromdal (2004) investigates children at English language school in Sweden to observe how they construct oppositional stances in dispute. He demonstrates that code-switching coincided with intense acts in the peak of argument, and can bring down or terminate the conflict. Bucholtz argues that a term could perform different functions within discourse and support solidarity during disagreement in her study of a slang term "güey" among Mexican youth (2009). The studies of stance in contemporary literature cover a heterogeneous range, yet research on stancetaking in disagreement context appears relatively rare in sociolinguistic studies. Taken together, the review of stance theory thus far reflects a sociolinguistic concerns involving the social processes and consequences of all forms of stancetaking, and how sociolinguistic indexicalities are

both resources for and targets of stance (Jaffe, 2009). The following section will move on to discuss the notion of disagreement, another key issue to this thesis.

## **2.4 Disagreement**

In this study, disagreement is treated as a neutral form of alignment during talk in interaction. It is essential to social interaction (Myers, 2004), and can be a display of solidarity and protect intimacy in a non-serious way (Schiffrin, 1984). It can also lead to a form of confrontation that may develop into dispute, argument, or create conflict (Kakava, 1993). Structurally speaking, disagreement sequences are constituted by at least three-turn exchanges, in which participants mutually contradict each other (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). The initiation of disagreement begins with an opposing move (Eisenberg & Garvey 1981). When speaker A expresses opinions or produces an action, A must be contested by the second speaker B. Sequentially, what is uttered by B must be countered by A again. The A-B-A mode can be continued by the participants in the contradicting manner. It is the basic opening sequence of verbal disagreement. In this sense, any previous excerpt can be interpreted as a predictor of disagreement (Maynard, 1985). Disagreement by its nature links to previous positions, and also calls for reaction from the interlocutor, usually another disagreement (Locher, 2004). Thus, it can be stated that disagreement constitutes both the second part and the first part of an adjacency pair. There are some turn initial markers which can be seen in the opening of disagreement, such as questions, negation words, and partial repetition of previous utterances (Leung, 2002).

### 2.4.1 *Disagreement in Intimate Relationship*

Only in the past decade, has disagreement among adults gained much-needed attention in linguistic studies. Previous studies have shown that disagreement in intimate settings, such as among family and friends, are not dispreferred acts (Schiffrin, 1984; Tannen & Kakava, 1992; Kuo, 1992; Georgakopoulou, 2001). Schiffrin (1984) presents American-Jewish argument as a non-serious and cooperative one. She claims there is cultural relativity in both the opening of disagreement and the use of argument as a vehicle for interactional ends. Furthermore, she proposes a sociable view of argument, which she assigns three features as evidence for sociability: sustained disagreement, participation framework, competition for interactionally negotiable goods. She also notes that sociable disagreement is not unique to Jewish people. Similarly, Billig (1989) examines the rhetorical argumentative aspects of a family discourse, where people who hold a strong view in relation to opposing views display a variety of expressions, rather than a fixed response. He presupposes that the speaker with strong attitudes has access to a culturally produced variety of opinions (*ibid*, p. 219). In Georgakopoulou's research on Greek young people's conversations, she argues that the concept of dispreferred acts needs to take context into account (2001). The production of disagreements is systematically implied and indirectly managed, rather than being delayed. For instance, the main devices of disagreement are indirectly constructed by specific turn-initial markers, stories as analogies, and questions, rather than motivated by the politeness (*ibid*). Interlocutors may show different strategies in the intimate relationship. The same holds for Kuo's research among Chinese friends, where she found that direct and aggravated disagreements are used to indicate the intimacy and their desire to maintain a sincere and independent self (1992). Evidently, the

occurrence of disagreement does not necessarily pose a threat to the relationship. This is the foreground for the multilingual couples' disagreement on different issues. Williams (2005) investigates disputes of a Chinese American family between a mother and her daughter where she illustrates social roles and code switching can be used to reconstruct family relationships in talk. Language alternation is used by the daughter to challenge her mother's attitude and role and code switching also marks her disagreement. Zhu also inspects disagreement between parents and children in the Chinese diasporic families in the UK where she discovers identities and social-cultural values can be negotiated, mediated and managed in bilingual interaction (2008).

Another point worth noting is the overgeneralisations related to different cultures. Traditional explanations, such as sociolinguistic class, gender, and race, and rhetorical purpose and audiences are descriptively useful, but not explanatory; thus more attention has been paid to individual speaker variation (Johnstone, 1996). Kakava (2002) observed inter- and intra-speaker variation during her discussion of how disagreement is constrained by culture and context in Greek conversations. Studies on both intra- and interspeaker variation are required to "explore the mechanisms that lead a speaker to use one strategy over another in the course of the same or different conflict episode" (*ibid*, p. 663). The homogeneous representation of any given cultural groups will simplify the complexity between the individual and community and not take the personality factors into account (Edstrom, 2004). It is significant especially for the analysis of intercultural couples' discourse. Moving from one culture to another, the positive values of oppositional stances in casual conversations among family members seem not to be out of the ordinary. Disagreement can be deemed as a means for negotiation and we may begin to explore the experience of building

aesthetic disagreement discourse (Maschler, 1994).

#### **2.4.2     *Terminology of Disagreement***

Research on disagreement has thrived in different fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication, and linguistics. Due to the extensive amount of work, the terminology that covers a range of narrow and broad concepts in the disagreement event seems problematic. There are different terms used in the 1980s and 1990s: disagreement, the adversative episode, the contracting routine, oppositional argument, quarrel, disputes and disputing, and conflict talk (Leung, 2002). I will discuss three allied notions: conflict, dispute, and argument, and elaborate on their association with disagreement. Dispute and conflict are more closely related due to their negative reputation, whereas argument and disagreement are related to more neutral concepts, such as opinions and claims.

Conflict talk is a relatively broad concept compared to the rest of the terms. Kakava (2002) defines conflict as “any type of verbal or nonverbal opposition ranging *from disagreement* to disputes, mostly in social interaction” (p. 650, emphasis added). Conflict had been seen as destructive, aggressive, disruptive, hostile behaviour that is negative and has no redeeming qualities (Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). The approach which assumes that there will be one winner and one loser of the disagreeing topic, and that all will accept the process and abide by its consequences, does not apply to the real world at all times. For instance, in multilingual couples’ conversations, disagreement often ends without losers and winners and with no resolution. A contradictory view of conflict is provided by many societies in which - sometimes it is bad, but there are times when it is good. One example for the acceptable conflict is

when it occurs with peers over a promotion. When the potential conflict is trivial, people prefer direct confrontation (Saunders, 1985).

Disputes comprise structure preference of *disagreement*, interruption and stretches of simultaneous talk, and specific types of cohesion between opponents' utterances (Gruber, 1998, emphasis added). It narrows down the scope of conflict to a verbal one. Goodwins (1983) treats dispute as divergence in opinions and actions, and quarrel is one type of dispute. She also uses argumentative sequences, oppositions, and disagreements alternatively in the discussion of disputes.

Argument is seen as an interactive process between two or more people, and can function as a means of *managing disagreement* (Jackson & Jacobs, 1980, emphasis added). Argument involves conversational interactivity of claim making, disagreeing with claim, counterclaim, and the process where *disagreement* initiates, is being managed, and accomplished (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998, emphasis added). As a response-centred event, argument seems to be restricted to the addressee's action-environment given that the next position to the subject of the disagreement is expected (Locher, 2004). Any utterance may contain arguable features, which can be opposed or contradicted, and it can be treated in a variety of ways (Maynard, 1985). The less aggressive potential disagreements are more argumentative, and thus more likely to solve the dispute (Langlotz & Loch, 2012).

Despite of the lack of agreement on terminology, conflict talk, disputes and argument share similarities and it is inevitable that "disagreement" will be involved in the definitions. It is not our purpose to determine which term is more inclusive. However, disagreement is considered more appropriate in the analysis of multilingual couples'

interaction since the discussion does not necessary involve conflict or dispute and it is the essential component in the negotiation of different opinions. Muntigl and Turnbull (1998) identified five types of disagreement: irrelevancy claim, challenges, contradiction, counterclaim and the combination of the last two, which are ranked from the most aggressive to the least aggressive level. Verbal disagreement is a clash of interest since it entails a conflict, except that disagreement alone does not equate to having an argument (Locher, 2004). Disagreement is characterised by incompatible goals, negotiation, and the need to coordinate self and other actions (Waldron & Applegate, 1994, p. 4). Kuo (1992) and Kakava (1993) provide disagreement strategies in different cultures, and classify aggravated and mitigated strategies to investigate interpersonal, situational, and cultural constraints. Culture may predispose people's choices towards the expression of opposition, but it is not the only determinant (Johnstone, 1989; Kakava, 2002).

Pomerantz (1984) distinguishes between two types of disagreement as weak or strong on sequential grounds (p. 74). A strong disagreement refers to an utterance directly contradicting the previous evaluation without containing any agreement components, whereas a weak one is in combination with partial agreement, such as qualifications, additions or exceptions (*ibid*). Although Muntigl and Turnbull's types of disagreement seem to be more complicated than Pomerantz's, both categories rank disagreement at different levels. Unlike the previous research, Kakava (1993, 2002) proposes a continuum of responses that ranges from mitigation to aggravation in disagreement, where she divides disagreement strategies into three groups: mitigated, strong yet mitigated, and strong. She observes that repetition of a prior utterance can be deemed as an opposition move for sarcasm, and questions whether an endearment addressing term can function as a marker of mitigating disagreement in Greek family

and friend's conversations (Kakava, 2002). Other strategies, such as hedge and analogy, are found to mitigate strong disagreement (*ibid*). It is useful to bear in mind that the same discourse strategies can be employed for different purposes during interaction. After clarifying the terminology, I will now take the structure of disagreement as the point of departure.

### 2.4.3 *Structure of Disagreement*

If participants persist in building up intensity of opposite views, disagreement will be sustained. While disagreement continues, the features of disagreement may change over the development as Coleman notes in his monograph, *Community Conflict* the focus of disagreement tends to be expanded, changed<sup>3</sup> or spread along existing social boundaries and networks (1957). Different features may follow linear routes or oscillate in between, until disagreement is resolved or discontinued, and disagreement cannot be explained without taking cultural, social, and ecological constraints into account (Grimshaw, 1990). A number of researchers use linguistic resources that participants possess at hand and non-linguistic variables, such as power and social status to study how disagreement is achieved. Kotthoff analyses giving up a position in a disagreement between students and lecturers, and finds most disagreements are adjourned later. She considers reluctance markers of partial agreement and concession acts as proof of change of preference structure (1993). The context specification changes as soon as disagreement begins, and becomes explicit step by step (p. 195). When an interlocutor performs a conversation action, the response is expected to be agreement as an unmarked form, while disagreement will be marked (Myers, 2004).

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<sup>3</sup> Expand in focus refers to the initial issues which are submerged or forgotten whereas change in focus indicates the interest moving from ideological positions to negative personalisation.



However, disagreement can be unmarked when it comes to compliments or in close relation settings (Sifianou, 2012). Studies have shown that children use direct and aggravated disagreement devices (Bogg, 1978; Goodwin, 1990) as do adults (Brown 1993; Kuo, 1992; Kakava, 2002; among others).

Once disagreement has begun, it may be difficult to terminate the disagreement, since participants as arguers tend to negotiate by convincing the other about the greater legitimacy of their positions. There are investigations of disagreement which focus on how it ends (Simmel, 1955; Vuchinich, 1990; Stein & Bernas *et al.*, 1997; Norrick & Spitz, 2008; among others). Samuel Vuchinich in his research about the sequential organisation of closing in verbal family disagreement described five basic formats of termination: (1) Submission, (2) Dominant third-party intervention, (3) Compromise, (4) Stand-off, and (5) Withdrawal (1990). Submission indicates one participant yields the initial position, while the other upholds his or hers. If both parties agree to accept the middle position, and do not insist on the primary positions, the disagreement closes in a compromise situation. It typically involves concession offers from one participant. Compromise and submission are the two formats that lead to a conclusion. Stand-off usually involves topic shifts, or re-contextualisation of the interaction, and participants suspend the disagreement without giving up their positions. Therefore, no resolution of the disagreement occurs. Unlike Vuchinich's categorisation, I suggest topic shifts should be distinguished as the sixth format, rather than viewing it as a sub-category of stand-off. Topic shifts by themselves do not necessarily refer to opposition. It could refer to a stand-off situation, a sign of withdrawal, or other strategic use. Lastly, when one participant leaves the interaction, either physically or verbally, the disagreement sequence would end in withdrawal. Dominant third party intervention, stand-off, and withdrawal all allow the disagreement to arise later. It is

noteworthy that whether the closure of disagreement is clear cut is questionable. For instance, it is not straightforward to conclude which format it belongs to as it can be withdrawal or stand-off, when the disagreement ends in silence.

#### **2.4.4      *Resolution of Disagreement***

I choose the term “resolve” instead of “terminate” as the ending of the disagreement, with the assumption that finding a resolution is the goal of the couples’ negotiation. However, the negotiation might remain unresolved. Norrick and Spitz (2008) argue that humour could be a resource for mitigating and even ending a conflict, and claim that among the five formats of terminating conflict, only compromise offers an equitable resolution. The orientation to humour allows participants to return to the topic and work on the resolution. Topic shifts reframe the interaction, which makes it possible to close a conflict with an abrupt topic change without previous resolution of the underlying disagreement (*ibid*). Similarly, Eisenberg and Garvey propose the resolution might be successful when both the opposer and the opposee make concession with compromise and countering moves (2009). They explore children’s verbal strategies of resolving adversative episodes and focus on their problem-solving ability. If the conflict is left unsolved, it is powerful opposition and will often surface repeatedly throughout the play session (*ibid*). The third-party intervention can be a way of resolving disagreement as Dunn’s study (1996) shows. She observes second-born children arguing with their siblings, mothers and close friends and finds that mothers engage in conciliation and negotiation when their children show signs of anger or distress (Dunn, 1996). It is questionable that the power relationship in the family is absolute, if the disagreement involves the exercise of power. Schegloff (2000) analyses overlapping talk and notes that participants usually keep talking until

a resolution is reached by using the overlap resolution devices, such as speaking louder in volume, higher in pitch, and faster or slower in pace. Marital partners have their own way of resolving conflict issues without verbalising it which refers to silence (Oduro-Frimpong, 2011). The resolution can also be achieved through the absence of interaction (*ibid*). However, disagreement in naturally occurring conversations may end with no “outcomes” with respect to the conflict between the participants which is resolved but rather a topic change occurs and hence “the dissent organization of talk is replaced by the consent organisation” (Gruber, 1998, p. 478).

As mentioned above, participants may employ silence, withdrawal, compromise, change of topic, humour or other devices to resolve their disagreement. In the following section, strategies employed in the multilingual couples’ disagreement discourse will be discussed. I will analyse examples of the discourse strategies selected in detail later in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## **2.5 Discourse Strategies in Disagreement**

### **2.5.1 *Definition of Discourse Strategies***

Some scholars argue that language use per se is strategic, given that “actors purposefully select from a wide array of resources those which optimally and cost-efficiently achieve the purpose at hand” (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997, p. 3). Others treat discourse strategies, or communication strategies as problem-solving activities, for instance, Poullisse *et al.* propose “strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of utterance due to his own linguistic shortcomings”

(1984, p. 72). Tannen (2007) points out that lines of interpretation and habitual use of linguistic strategies are likely to diverge due to different cultural backgrounds, which is not limited to country of origin or native language, but also includes ethnic heritage, class, geographic region, age, and gender. She proposes that linguistic strategies are polysemous and ambiguous. Therefore, a general theory of discourse strategies must “begin by specifying the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that needs to be shared if conversational involvement is to be maintained, and then go on to deal with what it is about the nature of conversational inference that makes for cultural, subcultural and situational specificity of interpretation” (Gumperz, 1982, p. 3).

Disagreement discourse is judged by its problem-solving capacity in addition to successfully gaining the addressee’s assent (van Eemeren *et al.*, 2007). People engaged in disagreement discourse are characteristically oriented toward resolving a difference of opinion and manoeuvre strategies to achieve agreement as well as to diminish potential tension (*ibid*). To obtain a more realistic insight into the strategic design of the disagreement discourse, the disagreement strategies in use need to be properly analysed with respect to the interactional speech acts<sup>4</sup>. The basic structure of analysis are the strategies or combination of strategies: code-switching, change of vocatives, topic shifts, questions, silence, humour, apology, discourse markers, and indirectness from the critical discussion aimed at resolving a difference of stance in family communication.

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<sup>4</sup> Speech acts are defined as the uttering of a sentence, or part of an action within the framework of social institutions and conventions, which are characterised by the actor's rational choice (Huang, 2006; Kasper, 2006).

### 2.5.2 *Code-Switching in Family's Communication*

Code<sup>5</sup>-switching (CS) which can be defined as an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same speech exchange (Woolard, 2004), is one of many readily available linguistic resources which are strategically manipulated by bilingual speakers (Li, 2000; Milroy & Gordon, 2003). In fact, monolinguals also consciously manipulate the switching between dialect, styles, intonation, levels of formality, etc. (Gardener-Chloros, 2009, p. 4). Attempts have been made to investigate the functions of CS from a socio-cultural perspective, to name a few studies: to mark reiteration, emphasis or quotation (Blom & Gumperz, 1972), to accomplish repair (Auer, 1995), to enhance turn selection and contextualise topic changes (Li, 1998), to serve fact-checking function (Gardner-Chloros *et al.*, 2000), and to soften refusals (Bani-Shoraka, 2005). Researchers who undertake this perspective argue that code-switching is a conversational strategy, and does not occur at random. The fact that many codes are involved in communication makes it difficult to assign one single function to code-switches in interaction (Nilep, 2006; Jaffe, 2007). That is to say a single turn in conversation may serve different purposes. Auer (1984) argues that code-switching may function without having a semantic meaning, but is very much embedded in the sequential development of conversations.

Conversational CS is seen as a common language practice among family and friends involved in informal social activities (Moyer, 2000). It is important to note that the inter-turn CS should not be seen as the result of imperfect linguistic competence (*ibid*).

The focus of code-switching in families indicates that speech situation is informal and

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<sup>5</sup> The notion 'code' is identified as a synonym for language variety. Code refers to language and when two languages are juxtaposed in discourse and/or within a sentence, the phenomena are described as code-switching, or language alternation, code-mixing, etc. (Auer, 1998).

the interactants are familiar with each other (Smith-Christmas, 2012). As Dorian (2010) and Lamb (2008) suggest, CS is more likely to occur in interactions when speakers are familiar with each other. I will briefly discuss previous studies that use family as a locus of where CS is commonly found in interaction, focusing in particular on how CS is related to speakers' language choice, stance-taking, disagreement, and identity play.

#### 2.5.2.1 *CS as Speakers' Language Choice*

Sociolinguists have a strong concern about the social meaning of code-switching along with the motivation and functions of CS (Woolard, 2004). Any elucidation of the meaning of code-switching, equivalent of the *why* questions, must arrive after the *how* questions which have been examined through the way participants interact locally and meaningfully (Li, 1998, p. 163 in Auer, 2002). In order to examine why bilingual/multilingual couples choose language A or language B, or mix languages to negotiate, Goffmann's concept of footing is highly relevant (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Footing refers to the way speakers re-align the discourse between themselves and their interlocutor (Goffmann, 1979). The same holds for Auer's (1984) observation that footing is integral to understanding CS, thereby highlighting the importance of stance in the analysis of code-switching. Gumperz's contextualisation cues, which are the various linguistic and extralinguistic resources the speaker may use to make his or her meaning understood, provide a point of view that the motivation for code switching is stylistic and metaphorical (1982). In his conversational inference theory he argues that CS is one of the rhetorical resources speakers use to signal how they intend their utterances to be interpreted (*ibid*). CS is one of the contextualisation cues speakers employ to refer to their shared backgrounds in order to interpret what is

going on. Zentella (1990) finds that bilingual children are very productive in using CS for a variety of footing functions, such as topic changes, contrasting between interrogatives and declarations, appositives, changes in discourse frames, and in changing roles. Negotiating context is achieved through the manipulation of contextualisation cues (Smith-Christmas, 2013). As Nilep writes, code switching is “an alternation in the form of communication that signals a context in which the linguistic contribution can be understood...this signalling is accomplished by participants in a particular interaction” (2006, p. 17).

Auer clarifies the term of language preference in a broader sense, which refers to the interactional processes of displaying and ascribing predicates to individuals whose nature depends on a variety of social, political and cultural contexts (2002, p. 8). Conversely, “whatever language a participant chooses for the organisation of his/her turn, or for an utterance which is part of the turn, the choice exerts an influence on subsequent language choices by the same or other speakers” (Auer, 1984, p. 5). Earlier studies which suggested that there is a language preference of their minority language for native speakers have been proven false (Bani-Shoraka, 2005). A language negotiation sequence ‘begins with a disagreement between two or more parties about which language to use for interaction, and ends as soon as one of them “gives in” to the other preferred language’ (Auer, 1984, p. 20-21). In a similar vein, Williams (2005) argues that social role reversals in conjunction with code-switching in which one participant switches away from her preferred language to the preferred language of the other, occurs in the study of family disagreement between a Chinese American mother and daughter. Given that it is very unlikely to ignore the linguistic features of ‘marked choices of language’, code-switching can be deemed the most significant discourse in bilingual conversation (Auer, 1991).

The notion of “marked/unmarked” is based on Myers-Scotton’s markedness model. It is similar to Fishman’s domain theory (1965) which associates specific acts of switching with domains appropriate to certain languages (Auer, 1995). The approach is more universal, and markedness treats what individuals always negotiate when they codeswitch as “positions in rights-and-obligations (RO) balances” (Myers-Scotton, 1993). For Myers-Scotton, linguistic varieties are always socially indexical. Su (2009) studies bilingual telephone conversations in a Taiwanese family, and suggests that CS can be used simultaneously with other linguistic strategies to negotiate interpersonal relationships in a face-threatening situation. She examines how generation and place of residence may influence the initiator’s pattern of code-switching. On the contrary, Li Wei (2005) argues that instead of being oriented to rights and obligations, or attitudes and identities, speakers cognitively choose their languages to index their rational decisions. In his monograph, *Three generations, two languages, one family* he proposes that even though the language patterns of older and younger speakers indicate preferences for Chinese and English respectively, an examination of how these preferences are locally constructed is required (Li, 1994). Through the systematic sequential analysis of the interaction, one can reveal the evidence of the social reality without assuming rationality on behalf of the speakers (Li, 2005). Woolard (2004) proposes an alternative way of looking at Myers-Scotton’s model by shifting the theoretical concept of markedness to focus on the indexicality, rather than a property of a code. She attempts to disentangle marking and social indexicality, since both unmarked variety and the marked variety are equally indexing a specific claim to an RO set, and usually to affective stances, such as respect.



#### 2.5.2.2 CS and Stance

Language choices and attitudes in the domain of multilingual couples' interaction are closely related. However, the attitude towards language alternation remains commonly negative among bilingual speakers (Piller, 2002), which has also influenced studies taking the opposite view (Gafaranga, 2007). The approaches to code-switching and stancetaking both emphasise the dialogic nature, drawing attention to turn-by-turn negotiation (Damari, 2010). CS can serve as a structural strategy that is employed in the process of stance-taking (Bassiouny, 2012). Emotional intensity is one of the concerns for affective stance, which makes the connection between code-switching and emotion relevant to stancetaking. Chiaro (2012) suggests that bilingual intercultural couples may not consider swear words in other languages as forceful as in their own mother tongue with regard to swearing. CS can be used as a strategy in different emotional states as demonstrated in a study of Chinese-English boy's code-switching patterns when conversing with the family (Bain & Yu, 2000). Smith-Christmas (2013) studies a Gaelic-English bilingual family and concludes the older bilinguals frequently code-switch in conjunction with modulating their stances. CS as the most powerful communication strategy can be used in concert with taking stances as a means to explicitly highlight particular stances, and accounts for why it is important for speakers to emphasise certain stances (*ibid*). Taking up a position, whether agreeing or disagreeing, indicates a stancetaking. Apart from what has been mentioned above, code-switching can be used to create a contrast to emphasise disagreement (William, 2005). A combination of weak agreement and code-switching for quoted speech can be used to mark the turn as an overt disagreement. For instance, when a mother deploys CS in conjunction with repetition or silence to flag her disapproval and rejection of her daughter's attitude,

CS serves the function of highlighting the affective intensity (*ibid*). Additionally, language contrast itself may constitute social intentions and the different codes that one speaker uses may reveal variable values (Jaffe, 2007). Epistemic stances consist of knowledge, information or beliefs, therefore social values are by no means excluded.

#### 2.5.2.3 CS and Disagreement

Code-switching can be used to create and maintain opposition in order to accomplish disagreement (Bani-Shoraka, 2005). Heller (1988) notes that code-switching, where there is strategic ambiguity, can be used both to create or neutralise disagreement, including requests, denials, topic shifts, elaborations or comments, validations or clarification. CS can serve to mitigate disagreement. While a hearer's disagreeing orientation to the preceding utterance can be observed in the content of her/his reply, one must also look at language choice for negotiating this meaning. Crodmal criticises Goodwin's studies of young girls' argumentative negotiations (1998), and argues that Goodwin makes little mention of the girls' language alternation as part of their construction of oppositional stances in the study (2004). Moyer (2000) studies Spanish-English bilingual conversations, and argues that when Spanish discourse marker *no* functions as an information checking device, it can mitigate the threat in the negotiation of disagreement. The language choice along with the metalingual meaning of the discourse marker allows the bilingual speaker to have more complex strategies available for expressing agreement or disagreement in talk (*ibid*). Bilingual speakers often seem to combine more usual monolingual discourse markers, such as hedges, delays, or pauses, with code-switching to mark preference organisation (Li, 1998). Jørgenson (1998) studies Turkish-speaking children's disagreements in Danish

schools, and argues that bilingual children show great skills in exploiting two languages to exclude monolinguals, or use CS as a way to counter opposite claims. Although his attempt to link the dominance in interaction and the majority/minority languages seem simplistic, the sequential aspects of negotiating language choice are relevant when considered in their local contexts. The contrastive choice of languages is effectively used to maintain opposition in an Azerbaijani/Persian family conversation (Bani-Shoraka, 2005). From a socio-cultural perspective, CS can serve the function of changing intergenerational family dynamics and values during disagreement and it also highlights the epistemic stance (Zhu, 2008).

#### 2.5.2.4 *CS and Identity*

The bilingual language exchanges show how speakers are using two languages at once, and the purpose of combining both languages may be tied to the speakers' desire to simultaneously index their identities (Moyer, 2000). What is said in which language is chosen by individuals to align or disalign with the standard language ideology and take position of different identities (Jaffe, 2009). Language alternation can be used to index and construct identities (Cashman, 2005), but not simple and straightforward links between languages and ethnicity, as different types of social membership can be indicated (Auer, 2005). Code-switching can function as a mechanism which lays claims to different indexes and appeals to different ideologies, and eventually reflects on speakers' identity (Bassiouny, 2012). CS is often used to indicate identification or intimacy (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). As exemplified in the study of Greek Cypriot culture of the young generation, the teenagers make use of CS for a variety of expressive and identity-creating/reinforcing purposes (*ibid*). One of the reasons Heller proposes for why people engaged in code switching during

disagreement discourse is that CS is attractive as a strategy in situations where unilateral choice entails claims regarding group membership for which a speaker does not want to be held responsible (1988). CS symbolises this split of “dual voicing”, which is the feeling of belonging and the desire to distance oneself at the same time.

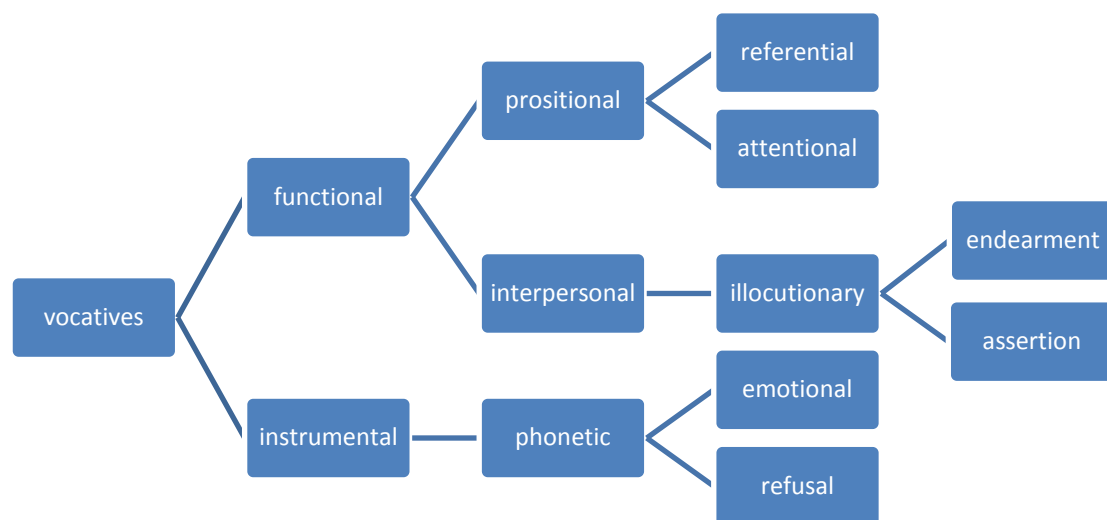
Code-switching serves another function, in Gumperz’s term “addressee specification”, which allows the participants to use the appropriate language to address different interlocutors, particularly in two conversations at once (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). CS can be used in conjunction with vocatives directly in the multilingual couples’ conversations. In the next section, the addressing terms as a discourse strategy will be discussed.

### **2.5.3      *Vocatives in Multilingual Couples’ Disagreement***

Generally speaking, vocatives are free selections by speakers for strategic purposes. Clayman (2012) states that address terms are syntactically optional with the consequence that each use represents a choice. People make use of different terms to address the interlocutors in order to denote how we wish to identify the relationship. Address terms may be understood as an alternative to the vocative case. Fraser (1990) divides vocatives into the following types: conventional appellations (John, Mom), occupation names (doctor, waiter), epithets (darling, sweetie), pronominal forms (you, someone) and special phonations (psst, ahhh). Vocatives may occur in the initial position, middle of utterance, or the final position. The act of positioning for address terms is by no means an absolute division. Lerner (2003) examines addressing terms in the practice of the selecting next speaker, and proposes that with sequence organisation and turn taking, it provides speakers with the resources for tacitly addressing a

recipient. Addressing the recipient by conventional appellations, such as personal names and relationship (husband), may serve to highlight the local interactional division of labor between speaker and recipient, or invite a wayward recipient to attend to the speaker's subsequent talk.

Haverkate's model of strategic effect produced by speech act (1983) is modified to provide a framework for analysing functions of vocatives. (Figure 2-1)



*Figure 2-1* Functions of vocatives

The instrumental vocatives serve the phonetic function, which can be better understood at the prosodic level. Personal names with different intonation can serve a wide range of strategies. For example, with a reinforcing contour, it indicates that the speaker imposes an order on the recipient, whereas with a terminal intonation contour, it may be used to express sympathy towards the addressee. From the positional perspective, if speakers choose to address names in the initial position of an utterance, it can function as an attention getter. An epithet, or the term of endearment, specifies

the relationship with emotion, which may denote an illocutionary act, such as request or an assertion. As for pronominal forms, it serves a referential function. The pronoun 'we' can be used for specific or non-specific reference. Non-specific 'we' is inclusive and typically occurs in persuasive discourse. By using 'we', instead of 'I', speakers make it possible to avoid direct confrontation with the interlocutor. In interactional terms, 'you' as a form of personal reference might be termed a recipient indicator, rather than a recipient designator. Speakers may develop a referential strategy by the use of third-person pronouns, which aims at creating a different social space, and it also reflects speaker's attitude toward the referential person. Positive or negative stances toward an addressed recipient are therefore relevant.

Special phonations are used mainly for emotional purposes, similar to interjections. It can be used to attract the interlocutor's attention before further information is passed on (Ameka, 1992). Some phonations are not directed at another person, but more as an expression of the speaker's mental state (*ibid*). It can be treated as a pragmatic marker. For instance, the interjection 'hey' is a summonsing or attention getting device, but within the participation framework of discourse, interjections can serve to hold the turn and to fill pauses (Norrick, 2009). Address terms can also be employed under specific circumstances, when addressing is to portend trouble in establishing a recipient, or as a demonstration of personal concern (Lerner, 2003). The participants' invocation of discourse identities are made relevant by the use of an identity category in an address term (Greatbatch & Dingwall, 1998). Addressing someone by his or her first name or figurative kinship term in disagreement can be interpreted as an expression of both power and solidarity (Tannen & Kakava, 1992).

In addition to code-switching and vocatives, there are other discourse strategies used

in multilingual couples' disagreement. From 1.4.3 to 1.4.9, those strategies- topic shifts, questioning, silence, humour, apology, discourse markers, and in/directness and gender, will be discussed in detail in the data analysis sections.

#### **2.5.4      *Topic Raising and Shift***

Among the confrontation strategies used in defining different opinions, there are specific strategies in the opening stage. Conversationists usually assume that it is about something and make contributions relevant to this, serving as a metacommentary only when there is pause, confusion, or when a new person joins, will topics be named (Myers, 2004, p. 9). Maynard (1980) defines topics as “what the conversation is about”, and notes that attention is often directed to “the structure whereby topicality is produced in the conversation” (p. 263). He discusses placement of topic change in various situations, such as restoring topical talk, solicits, refocusing, and disagreement. Topic organisations and topic control within the turn taking process are examples of discursive resources that are available to speakers in the interaction (Yieke, 2007). As Tannen (2007) argues, speakers who raise the most topics are not always dominant, and the effect of raising topics may also be an effect of differences in pacing and pausing. As far as topical structure is concerned, it cannot be understood without topic shifts in conversation, which is often utilised “in response to disagreements” or “various sorts of recipient inattention” (Maynard, 1980, p. 285). In Myers' focus-group research on opinions, he pinpoints that conversation analysts' categories of topics are ambiguous and incomplete. Instead, he suggests five boundaries of topics to be studied, namely: (1) introduce new topics, (2) acknowledge or reject topics, (3) shift, broaden, narrow, or change the topic, (4) close the topic as an interactive process, signalled by the participants as well as the moderator, and (5) reopen topics

(2004, p. 90). The way people interpret and use topics in sequence is complex. Both topic raising and topic shifts are strategic choices. Change of topic is when the subject becomes unrelated to the talk in prior turns and new referents are used, and thus it implicates and locates a series of utterances constituting a different line of talk (Maynard, 1980). Li Wei (1998) presents an example of Cantonese/English bilingual speakers, who are able to use a code-switching strategy to contextualize topic changes in the ongoing interaction. Topic change functions as a means for speakers to re-engage in formal turn-by-turn talk, when disagreement turns result in pre-determined self-selections for turns at talk (Maynard, 1980).

#### **2.5.5      *Questions as Challenge***

Koshik (2008) divided interrogatives into five different forms, namely yes-no questions, wh-questions, declarative questions, tag questions, and alternative questions. They can be used to implement hostile assertions of opinions, rather than questions to be answered (Heritage, 2002). Opposing questions are commonly used in disagreement and different types (explicit, rhetorical, implicit, distorting) of questions might be used strategically (Gruber, 2001). They “confront a single topical aspect of his/her own preceding turn and do not reject the whole turn” (p. 1824). When the disagreement organisation is not fully established, a speaker can formulate a yes/no question to indicate his or her intention of different stances. For challenging an interlocutor, the uses of polar interrogatives which are unanswerable, are produced in a context of incipient disagreement (Heinemann, 2008). Questions that are asked from a position of knowledge convey their assertion about the recipient’s stance. Consequently, recipients treat these questions as challenging and either provide non-answer responses or refrain from responding at all (*ibid*). In a similar vein,



wh-questions, when not for asking information, are able to challenge given the questions convey a strong epistemic stance of the speaker (Koshik, 2003). The difference is that challenges implemented through wh-questions can be ambiguous for the recipient to reject the grounds for making the challenge, and treat the question as a genuine request for information instead (Egbert and Vöge, 2008). The recipient is allowed not to answer the question or deliver a minimal answer if the prior turn is understood not only as a question but as a challenge, and the response first backs down in epistemic strength in the face of the challenge (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009).

According to Gruber (2001), explicit opposing questions might involve shift of topics. The placement of rhetorical type enables the speaker to reject the preceding turn as irrelevant. Through use together with the discourse marker *but*, implicit type can indicate the contrast between utterances. Implicit type invites the addressee to self-correct indirectly. Distorting opposing questions are similar to implicit ones, except there might be loose or no topical connections between turns. All opposing questions have rather weak projecting potential given that questions are backward directed (Gruber, 2001). Actions such as challenging, accusing, or doubting achieved within a question format indicate that speakers employ various strategies on an indirect or implicit level (Hutchby, 1996, p. 30). The association between asserting a contradictory position, and following it with a negative interrogative, are designed to challenge the interlocutor (Heritage, 2002). Negative tag questions that follow the hostile propositional content invite a respondent to produce an interactional object in terms of disagreement, rather than in terms of its interrogative frame as a ‘question to be answered’ (*ibid*).

### 2.5.6 *Silence*

An inter-turn silence of approximately one second (Jefferson, 1989) leads to a failure of conversational transition when a series of silences occur (Maynard, 1980). These types of communication strategies have been associated with negative valuation in many contexts, for instance, as absence of speech, and absence of meaning and intention. Tannen (1985), in her article about perspectives on silence, suggests the positive and negative views of silence are due to its inherent ambiguity, which arises from what is assumed to be evidenced or to be omitted from existence. If the omission of something negative represented is the assumption, silence can be seen as a positive symbol, whereas it will be negatively valued if it is assumed to represent something positive omitted. Later on, in her investigation of two literary examples of family conflict, Tannen observes silence as “a conflict management tactic”, and “disruption of [intimate] relationships is avoided so long as silence rather than direct expression is the response to potential conflict” (1990, p. 276). Oduro-Frimpong (2011) examines how marital couples employ silence to manage conflict situation with their partners, and categorises communicative functions of silence as withdrawal, role change, and no talk is no interaction. He considers withdrawal as a form of silence, which includes physically leaving the room and psychologically refusing to indulge in the conversation. Role change is deemed a typical feature of using silence which allows a momentary de-escalation of the conflict situation. Additionally, silence is captured in topics, such as sex and finance, to avoid conflict without verbalising the issues.

Ephratt (2008) restates Roman Jakobson’s communication mode for silence, namely: (1) the referential function, (2) the emotive function, (3) the conative function, (4) the phatic function, (5) the poetic function, and (6) the metalanguage function. Based on

the notion of being part of the communication, she identifies eloquent silence, distinguished from stillness, pauses, or silencing, as an active means chosen by the speaker in his or her turn to express himself or herself through silence as a message (p. 1913). When silence is treated as a (direct or indirect) speech act, it can serve the function of concession and rhetorical questions. It can operate as a discourse marker within the conative function, in which it activates the addressee to take the floor, and assume the responsibility for leading the discourse.

A number of scholars investigate silence based on an interactional approach. Enniger (1991) assumes all silences during interactive periods are “significant absences and therefore have the status of zero signs” (p. 4). Similarly, Poyotos (2002) proposes “eloquent reality” of silences, which denotes that interactive silences are not semiotic or communicative vacuums. Silence can be used to express negative attitudes, such as refusing, to manipulate, to cause anxiety, and to show oppression in response to a threat. Jaworski and Galasinski (2000) maintain that the interpersonal metafunction of silence can be used to create, maintain or reduce social distance. Nakane’s monograph about intercultural communication based on the study of Japanese students in Australia, suggests looking at the positive aspects of silence and taking different cultural concepts into account (2007). In a similar vein, silences and long pauses are accepted by Swedish people, and are mostly treated as a positive phenomenon. It is common to avoid interrupting other speakers in Swedish culture (Tryggvason, 2006), and also in a few other nationalities who feel equally comfortable when keeping silent.

Not only does the display of contrary positions give rise to disagreement turns, but the occurrence of silences can also engender disagreement (Maynard, 1980). Saunders

(1985) scrutinises Italian families' emotion management, and reflects that the silent interactive style increases when serious disputes occur, as it is a common strategy for management of intense situations, especially in highly emotional states. Silence allows the passive expression of discontentment, so it can be used to help the individual control the emotion without direct challenges (p. 181). His assumption is given the culturally patterned use of silence – to avoid confrontation, which involves situations of great affective tension, where people may be fearful of provoking a serious disagreement that can have lasting effects.

### **2.5.7      *Humour***

Humour is thought to function as a socially acceptable means of expressing hostility and criticism, and it is constructed and understood interactively, so its functions are locally negotiated (Bell, 2009). The ongoing humorous discourse indexes social relationships, moral stances and a certain context (Kotthoff, 2007). The recipient is assumed to laugh or show their appreciation by contributing more humour, playing along with the gag, using echo or overlap, offering sympathy and contradicting self-deprecating humour as common support strategies (Hay, 2001). Norrick and Chiaro (2009) deem humour as a mode of interaction that “enables people to interact more smoothly and to accomplish goals difficult or impossible to reach otherwise” (p. XVII). Humour can be described under the genre of jokes, teasing, and joint fantasising.

Coates (2007) argues that conversation is one of the key loci of humour, and it is now widely agreed that shared laughter nurtures group solidarity. The same holds for Boxer and Cortés-Conde's (1997) claim that conversational joking acts as a means of

social control and identity display, and functions to develop a relational identity among participants (p. 275). Habib studies the effect of joking in terms of power and rapport, where she finds that teasing and disagreement can be employed jointly to establish relational identity display and development. By doing so, it reaffirms a preexisting identity, and elaborates on topics that lead to scope expansion and acquisition of new notions that have not been encountered previously (2008). Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (2009) observe how humour is introduced into conversational self-disclosure, and suggest that speakers may tactically introduce humorous self-talk to lighten a conversation, and build camaraderie through shared amusing experiences. By self-disclosing a troubling personal experience, speakers may improve concerns and gain a more objective perspective. Humour can serve to downplay an unintentional and potentially embarrassing self-revelation. Kersten (2009) argues that second language learners use humour as a mechanism to alleviate communicative problems resulting from linguistic inadequacies.

Kotthoff (2007) discusses a set of cues that index the contextual presupposition in conversational humour, such as code-switching, social stylistics, features of oral art, repetition, marked wording, prosody, interjections, laughter, and mimicry. For Boxer and Cortés-Conde, conversational joking or situational humour is different from joke telling. The definition of joke telling is a highly conventionalized and socially marked speech behaviour, whereas conversational joking/situational humour is “a play frame created by the participants, with a back-drop of *ingroup knowledge*, encompassing not only verbal features but also *suprasegmentals* and non-verbal communication” (p. 277, emphasis added). Teasing and self-denigration are considered as subdivision of conversational joking, which can be a form of bonding. Irony is quite often integrated into teasing, but ironic statements can be humorous or serious. Kotthoff (2009) has

analysed ironic interactions between adults, where irony is treated as a “parsimonious communication form that presents *contrasting stances*” (p. 50, emphasis added). There are different types of teases, ranging from bonding, to slightly aggressive ones, in Boxer’s terms referred to as “biting”. Some sub-types of irony correspond to teasing, while others correspond to critical comments or joint fantasy production (*ibid*). Joint fantasising can be defined as “the emergent production of a shared fantasy, often with several conversational participants making short contributions which create coherent scenes through the incremental structuring and augmentation of unreality” (Kotthoff, 2007, p. 278).

In general, humour can function to assist the establishment of a relational identity among speakers, which is in comparison with individual identity, negotiated with others and through others (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997). Laughter serves as a contextualization cue, a stimulus with an extra element of additional meaning, which indicates “take it easy”. Teasing can also be described as negotiating social norms and accepting differences in regards to them. As such, it functions as a form of social and verbal play, such as identity forming across cultural boundaries, and even serves as a conflict diffuser and a facilitator of learning (Miller, 1986; Boxer, 2004). In irony speech, an utterance can have multiple layers of meaning that are in opposition to each other. To make sense of this type of non-literal communication, people are required to infer other speakers’ general stances as a basis to understand the speakers’ present intentions and attitudes (Kotthoff, 2009). Norrick and Spitz (2008) explore how humour mitigates conflict in interaction, and attribute the effectiveness of humour to five factors: the seriousness of the conflict; the social power relationship between participants; self-deprecating or directed to third party humour type; the reaction of participants, and who initiates humour. When jokes disrupt the flow of

conversation, it can be seen as aggressive (Norrick, 1993).

The most relevant one is Chiaro's research about bilingual couples' communication (2009), where she discovers that humorous talk acts as a bonding agent in intercultural couples to help overcome the myriad of intercultural difficulties such relationships inevitably face. Couples learn to appreciate and to use the humour of their partner's culture, given that they make an effort to teach their own brand of humour to their mate and vice versa. Through jokes or making puns, the playful banter creates solidarity and harmony, and a sense of exclusive intimacy (p. 214). She also finds couples use both languages for humorous talk indifferently.

#### **2.5.8     *Apology***

Apologies, like other speech acts, are often performed through conventionalized or ritualized utterances. Through different means of semantic expressions, apologies are usually described as: the request action used to ask for forgiveness (Stenström, 1994), a performative verb for expression of regret (Suszczynska, 1999) or an explanation (Holmes, 1989). Holmes (1995) defines it as a speech act intended to remedy the offense for which the apologisee takes responsibility and to rebalance social relations between interlocutors (p. 155). Bulm-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) perceive apologizing as a violation of a social norm that has been committed. Likewise, Bergman and Kasper (1993) accentuate its purpose of restoring social relational harmony in the contextual assessment of situations in which speakers have committed some offense. Social distance plays an important role in apology performance, that is, respondents assumed to express responsibility more explicitly for the offense indicate the closer relationship between the offender and the offended (p. 99-100). The more obligation

and face-loss involved in an offense, the more of an aggravating apology is provided. According to Olshtain and Cohen, apologies are realized through a set of strategies, including (1) an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), (2) an expression of responsibility for the offence, (3) an account of the cause of violation, (4) an offer of repair, and (5) a promise of forbearance (1983). Nureddeen (2008) offers a different perspective on apology, where she adds the functions of ‘concern for the hearer’ (6) and ‘avoidance or denial of responsibility’ (7).

Some researchers propose using apologetic strategies as culture-specific (Suszczynska, 1999; Nureddeen, 2008; Shariati & Chamani, 2010). The universal norms of politeness theory are not sufficient to explain the nature of these differences related to attitudes from various cultures. Suszczynska defines apologizing as a context and culture-sensitive speech-act set in the data of realisation of apology in English, Hungarian, and Polish, and concludes the differences in the distribution of the strategies across a variety of situations are obvious indicators of their sensitivity to contextual factors (1999). The centre of attention is drawn to the sequential arrangement and the content of linguistic form, rather than speakers’ choice and arrangement of strategies. Strategically speaking, it is possible that people offer apologies without really feeling responsible for the offense, for instance, when the speaker apologizes on behalf of others or another, or where the offense cannot be avoided (Coulmas, 1981). McEvoy (1995) assesses the descriptive and non-descriptive meaning of “I’m sorry but...” and argues the utterance suggests :(1) the truth is not a conclusion, (2) contesting the definition, (3) contesting the illegal, unjust, or immoral nature, (4) ascribing to procedural defense, or (5) invoking particular circumstances. Studies in other languages are required to shed light on the subtle differences in speech act performance across cultures by revealing universal or



culture-specific rules of language use, and deeper analyses.

### 2.5.9 *Discourse Markers*

Schiffrin deliberately defines Discourse Markers (DM) vaguely in terms of “related to units of talk” characterised by boundaries, such as brackets (participants’ identities, rules and procedures), sequential dependence (devices on discourse level), and operational class (in contrast to part of speech) (1987). Discourse markers, to name a few, *well, you know, oh, like, m, yeah, I mean*, have often been described as linguistic elements which are “multifunctional but syntactically optional”, and contribute to scaffold the “pragmatic coherence” of interaction (Jucker & Ziv, 1998; Fraser 1999; Smith & Jucker, 2002; Müller 2005; Romero-Trillo, 2009). Sociolinguists have paid great attention to the subject since the eighties; however, there is no agreement on the terminology of these elements among scholars. As such, fillers, interjections, pragmatic markers, discourse particles are employed in a variety of research (Maschler, 2000; Fischer, 2006; Ajmer, *et al.*, 2006; Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg, 2009). Redeker (1991) in her review of Deborah Schiffrin’s monograph “Discourse Markers” pinpoints that the definition of discourse markers is deficient due to “a lack of *clarity* and *consistency*”, and the “use of *theoretical terms* and analytical categories” (p. 1139, emphasis mine). Furkó (2005) attempts to find out the reason for the confusion of the pragmatic marker / discourse marker dichotomy by examining the cases of *well* and *of course*. He points out that it is unjustifiable in most of the cases due to the multifunctionality and semantic-pragmatic heterogeneity of discourse markers. In my study, the widest scope, and least restricted range of the term, discourse markers will be used. Maschler (2009) views DMs as linguistic elements for the process of using language in interaction. Her approach is based on corpus rather than a theory, and she

suggests a three-fold framework: interaction-textual, interpersonal, and cognitive realms, which is suitable for analysing multilingual couples' disagreement discourse. Code-switching and DM *well*, as the most frequent markers in my data, are discussed below.

#### 2.5.9.1 *CS as a Discourse Marker*

Discourse markers are often highlighted in bilingual conversation by virtue of switching from one language to another in which discourse is accomplished (Maschler, 1994a, 2000). Maschler provides the semantic criteria for bilingual discourse marking systems by stating that an added particle may be considered as a discourse marker if it refers to the metalingual realm of the text or the interaction between the participants (1994b). It falls nicely within the concept "contextualisation cues" mentioned earlier in Section 2.5.2. In her Hebrew-English bilingual data, she proposes disagreement can reflect a number of binary contrast types: (a). referential contrast between two opinions, (b). interpersonal contrast between speakers representing them, (c). contrast between different language games, (d). contrast between languaging<sup>6</sup> and metalanguaging<sup>7</sup> (*ibid*). It is found there are no equivalents in some cases of verbal activities associated with discourse markers in one language to another, given its culturally dependent nature. In Stroud's analysis of code-switching in Gapun, Papua New Guinea, he criticises the assumption that speakers' intentions can be perceived by listeners, for each specific meaning of a codeswitch is not shared by non-Western societies (1992). Melisa Moyer (2000) investigates the use of a particular discourse

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<sup>6</sup> Languaging refers to Becker's word which indicates languaging as an ongoing process continually reshaped and negotiated among participants in a text act (1988, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Maschler uses "metalanguaging" to signal the frame where languaging takes place and which the speaker is communicating metalingual information about how the utterance is intended.

marker in Spanish- *no?* for negotiating disagreement and agreement in Spanish/English bilingual conversation in Gibraltar. She finds that *no* as a DM can function as a yes-no request or information checker in order to communicate in the metalingual realm. Language convergence can be used as a strategy both for agreement and for mitigating disagreement (*ibid*). Different language choices allow bilingual users to have the flexibility of switching in between languages and communicating various meanings. In most of the cases in bilingual disagreement, a different stance is expressed with respect to the speaker's preceding utterance and with language divergence (Auer, 1984).

#### 2.5.9.2 *Well as a Discourse Marker*

*Well* is one of the most frequent discourse markers in disagreement conversation, and it focuses on both prior and upcoming utterances. Some scholars focus on the comparison of the equivalent forms between two codes. To name a few: Cuenca (2008) uses a contrastive analysis of *well* in English/Catalan; Aijmer, Foolen and Simon-Vandenberghe analyse *well* and its translations in Swedish and Dutch from fictional works (2003). Romero-Trillo's corpus-driven analysis of discourse markers compares the usage between native speakers and learners of English (2002). He found that learners of English use the discourse markers *well* and *you know* (among others) much less frequently than native speakers, and when learners used these lexical items, they were more likely to be in their ideational, non-pragmatic usages. Thus, he calls for the need for teaching pragmatic markers. Müller (2005), on the other hand, suggests different patterns of discourse marker usage for German learners of English. Her study is based on the retellings and discussion of a short film by American native English speakers and German learners of English. She found German speakers

overuse the marker *well*, and her explanation was the English markers were overtaught in the textbook. It is significant to note that the conclusions of different researchers are in contrast with one another and both comparisons seem plausible. Intercultural studies of DMs are crucial for the sake of discovering which are universal and which are culture-specific (Aijmer, *et al.*, 2003).

Schourup points out that *well* serves as a “quasi-linguistic mental state”, which conveys that the speaker is actively considering what is relevant to determining what to follow next (2001). The speaker’s need to organise discourse reflects the meta-lingual nature of DMs which signals the frame shifts (Maschler, 2009). It has been developed in Aijmer’s analysis of *well*, which mentions that it acts as a framing device (introducing a new topic or new information) in the conversation and only in certain contexts (*e.g.* indirect answer), which usually occurs turn-initially (2011). De Klerk (2005) proposes four cognitive effects of *well* in her corpus which she terms a). the speaker needs time to contemplate, b). encouraging the hearer to reconsider an assumption, c). achieving discourse coherence, and d). a signal for a change of turn. Her Xhosa English corpus demonstrates *well* serves to search for relevance in negotiating context (*ibid*). Fung and Carter consider *well* in denoting the thinking process and hesitation according to their classifications of the cognitive functions of DMs (2007). The focus of the previous studies is corpus-driven, and the purpose is to find out what the discourse marker is doing during dynamic conversations.

The polysemy approach makes it possible to explain the fuzzy boundaries of DMs with a variety of overlapped functions (Furkó, 2005). As in the case of *well*, it may show in all categories, including interactional, structural, and cognitive functions (Fung & Carter, 2007), but its function as a discourse marker is not related to any of

the semantic meanings, *i.e.* adjectival, and adverbial use (Norrick, 2001). Linguists should revise the aim of identifying a single definition of *well*, since they all agree on the polysemous nature of this marker (Blakemore, 2002; Cuenca, 2008). Accordingly, the usage of *well* does not necessarily have to be exclusive, but the marker needs to be treated as multi-functional due to its diverse characteristics.

## **2.5.10      *Directness /Indirectness, Swear words and Gender***

### **2.5.10.1    *Directness and Indirectness***

Indirectness is “an identity producing discourse strategy” which is performed by speakers consciously, and it can be used to make meaning in conversations about topics that might be avoided (Morgen, 2010). Conversational indirectness can be employed as a strategy to mitigate the effect of an utterance, and thus avoid disagreement (Ostman, 1981). John Searle’s speech act theory (1975) probably provides the most widely recognised definition to begin with. An indirect speech act is an act that purports to have one goal, but actually aims to achieve another goal (Frajzyngier & Jirsa, 2006). Searle distinguishes indirect speech act from direct speech, when “speaker’s utterance meaning and the sentence meaning come apart in various ways...speaker may utter a sentence and mean what he says and also mean another illocution with a different propositional content” (p. 59). Searle’s argument is explicitly on account of the primacy of speaker’s intention, which means what speakers try to communicate is their intention to do something. His view of illocutionary act and meaning is challenged by anthropologists and sociolinguists, who argue that there are cultures in which the intention to mean may differ from non-western countries (Duranti, 1988; Schegloff, 1988a; Geis, 1995, among others).

Wierzbicka (1991) suggests that until some clear definition of these terms is provided, the whole distinction between direct and indirect speech acts should be abandoned. In addition, speech act theory does not distinguish between indirect means of expression and indirect speech acts. Searle's assumption is that only certain linguistic forms have indirect speech act potential. What actually matters for indirection is either the conventional association of these forms and particular speech acts, or something extra that speakers do to embellish their speech, but between elements of interaction structures and a conventional association of these forms the locus of interaction is made (Tannen, 1984; Frajzyngier & Jirsa, 2006).

Kiesling and Johnson (2010) expand the function of indirectness to four types, namely, (1) stance indirection, (2) topic indirection, (3) participation indirection, and (4) production indirection. Conversational interaction involves many functions simultaneously, such as denotation, stance, speech acts, managing turn-taking and participation. Thus, it is not solely about accomplishing speech acts. Their categories are in accord with Brenneis' typology (1986), where he includes a number of dimensions, involving what has been said (topic-centred), the speaker's stance (voice-centred), the participation of audience (audience-centred), and the formal features or aspects of the organisation (event-based). A conventionally-understood interpretation for a linguistic form does exist, but it may not be tied to the speaker's intention as conventional interpretation suggests. It locates convention in the norms of the speech community or culture.

In some cultures and languages, the use of indirect means becomes a preferred style of expression, occurring across semantic domains. For instance, the employment of hedging devices as an indirect means is assertion making rather than its being

motivated by the speaker's evaluation of knowledge. As exemplified by a Greek daughter's interpretation of her father's comment "if you want, you can go", Tannen points out "only a part of meaning resides in the words spoken; the largest part is communicated by hints, assumptions, and audience filling-in from context and prior experience" (1984, p. 193). Morgan (2010) investigates the power relationship and indirectness in daily African American discourse and argues that indirectness can be used as a strategy to make meaning in interaction, such as producing and revealing identities. Some case studies have demonstrated that the use of indirect means in specific domains in many cultures is not motivated by politeness (Frajzyngier & Jirsa, 2006). In Tannen's study of family discourse, she argues that when a participant speaks in a voice to another, he or she borrows aspects of other's identities, or in her words, "ventriloquizing" in terms of intertextuality (2007, 2010). By doing so, speakers can indirectly deflect the impression of giving orders. The family members employ the indirectness strategy in interaction to distance themselves from the words they are uttering, which also allow them to avoid potential face-threatening aspects (Tannen, 2010). She recounts an example of the disagreement between a couple when the wife provided a suggestion to her husband for ordering food in a restaurant, and argues that both the husband's complaint in assuming that his wife's question implies a criticism of his choice and her motivation of care for his well being are valid and indirectly evidenced (*ibid*).

#### 2.5.10.2 *Swear Words*

Ljung (2011) defines swearing as utterances containing non-literal meaning taboo words, and it is formulaic and emotive language (p. 4). She categorises three functions of emotive language, namely: interjections (shit, bitch, God, bloody hell), emphasisers

(what the fuck), and expletive slot fillers (bloody, fucking) (*ibid*). The expletive slot fillers include curse words. Swearing is a learned behaviour to express anger aggressively and verbalise frustration until a normal equilibrium is re-established (Montagu, 2001). However, swearing is not necessarily impolite, to the extent that offensive language is used within the boundaries of what is considered to be situationally appropriate in discourse (Jay & Janschewitz, 2007). In this light, whether it is more acceptable to swear in a language other than one's first language and, if so, how far it is tolerable within an intimate relationship should be taken into account (Chiaro, 2012). Dewaele (2004) examines language choice for anger expression among web questionnaire respondents, and shows that bi-multilingual speakers share the perception of their first languages as the most emotional ones. As he concludes, "the swearwords in the L1 allow the speaker to vent his/her anger efficiently, and the communicative intention and emotional force can probably be interpreted through nonverbal cues" (p. 220). A number of participants report that L1 swearwords may 'pop out' uncontrollably to their partners at the moments of frustration, anger or pain, even though their partners are not proficient in that language (*ibid*). Palvenko (2005) explains that multilingual speakers may feel compelled to switch to their dominant or most proficient language in order to use the richest and most accessible set of linguistic resources. Language proficiency could account for less frequent disagreement in some cases. For example, one participant in De Klerk's study of English-Afrikaans couples (2001) admitted that they had initial communication difficulties because the wife felt frustrated when the husband asked "what does that word mean?" in disagreement. Piller (2002) investigates German-English couples' talk, and finds that some participants report their disadvantage in L2 English during a heated discussion because of the inability to express themselves adequately. However, the first languages are not always the languages of intimacy and the L2 the language



of detachment, since different languages can have different affective meanings depending on the interlocutors and the situation (Palvenko, 2005). Koven's study (2004) of a Portuguese-French bilingual shows that when arguing in Portuguese, the anger would not come as strongly as in French, given that the participant restricts herself from using profanity in her parent's language, in this case, Portuguese. It fits well with the statement that a code switch might mitigate or intensify the affective force of an utterance (Gumperz, 1982; Koven, 2004). On the one hand, some speakers revert back to their native language to swear, even when the couples mainly use the other language, their partner's language, to communicate in disagreement. Participants may prefer certain languages that the interlocutor would not understand on a more personal and emotional topic (Dewaele, 2010). The communicative intention and emotional force of swearing can probably be perceived through nonverbal cues despite insufficient proficiency in the partner's language (Dewaele, 2004). A perception of lower emotional force of swearwords can either favour or hinder their use (*ibid*).

Dewaele observes that female participants gave higher scores to the perceived strength of swearwords and there is significant difference in the L1 between male and female participants (2004). Steinstrom (1994) also compares the use of intensifiers between boys and girls in teenage talk, and finds that girls use them more often but tend to use weaker expletives, whereas boys use more swear words. This would clearly appear to relate to the issue of gender difference. I will next turn to the discussion of gender and language use in the following section.

### 2.5.10.3 Gender

Work on language and gender issues has been produced abundantly since Robin Lakoff introduced “women’s language” in the mid-1970s. The concept of women’s language refers to non-dominance (Ostman, 1981). One of her former students, Deborah Tannen follows the research, and discusses gender and discourse, with special concern for power and solidarity. Tannen argues that neither silence nor volubility is a self-evident sign of powerlessness or domination (1993, p. 176). In her earlier work on the relationship between power and solidarity emerging in conversational discourse, she concludes the relation is rather paradoxical (Tannen, 2007). Her neutral interpretation of the difference between men and women has caused criticism from feminists’ and essentialists’ points of view. The critique is on the basis of the perceived over-emphasis on men and women’s communication styles without taking social constructivism into account (Cameron, 1998; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). Elinor Ochs (1992) stresses the importance of indexicality, which is described as a property of speech through cultural contexts, such as gender, and constituted by particular stance and activities. She argues that in some activities, women tend to directly confront others. As such, the association between women and greater politeness is not universal. Penelope Brown (1993) reports the angry confrontation in a court case, and compares gender influences on language usage in casual cooperative conversation. Brown proposes the reason women tend not to reveal their anger while men are used to conflict is the outcome of socialization. She presents an unusual case with two women breaking the principles in the Mexican community of Tenejapa (*ibid*). Remarkably, the term “gender” can be viewed differently within linguistic interpretation. Whether the norms of gender-appropriate performance are universal or culture- specific remains unanswered; nevertheless it might be more acceptable to

state that the research of language and gender is part of social meaning, which is habitual use of language and context dependent (Brown, 1993). In Japan, a unique pattern discovered in the middle and upper-middle class Western men and women, indicates the societal environment favoured men rather than women regarding acquiring Japanese (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). The discussions above focus on the relationship between two genders in society at large. The study of couplehood is different, given that it is a relationship between two individuals and hence belongs to the private dimension (Piller, 2002).

The interactional methodology is widely used in the study of languages and gender. Ostman (1981) observes the use of the discourse marker, *you know*, between men and women, and concludes that it is not the overall frequency that matters, but rather the manner in which it is used in an utterance. Women tend to use *you know* to qualify whole speech acts, or information units, whereas men seem to use *you know* to modify phrases or as a lexical hedge. For instance, women use *you know* more often after a false start, and men use *you know* between obligatory constituents in an utterance more frequently (*ibid*). Irony expressions through conventional indirect utterances are commonly used by mothers, whereas non-conventional hints and sarcastic comments are observed in the fathers' utterances (Brumark, 2006). Tannen (1999) claims that gender-related influence is at play at every moment of interaction, and advocates that linguists need to be aware of the danger of building on descriptions of gendered patterns, even if those descriptions appear to be accurate. The relationship between gender and language is better understood by asking how interaction is framed, and what alignment speakers are taking up (*ibid*).

Linguistic resources are used to index speakers' positioning with respect to social

categories, such as geographic region, ethnicity, social class, age, sexual orientation, profession, and gender. (Kiesling, 2006; Baynham, 2006). In addition, whether the multilingual spouses' proficiency of the language spoken, the cultural diversity, and the pragmatic competence<sup>8</sup> are positively related need to be examined in more detail. It is essential to note that some linguistic features are culture-specific, and the usage might differ from country to country as the nature of intercultural pragmatics is ambivalent (Thomas, 1995). As Wierzbicka suggests, what is meant can be conveyed in different languages, and our choices of words involving interpersonal interaction is shaped by cultural values and cultural norms (1991, p. 2).

## **2.6 Research Questions Revisited**

As mentioned in Chapter 1.4.1, this thesis is intended to investigate the two questions:

1. How multilingual couples from different cultures disagree in a way that will cultivate, or at least not damage their relationship? and 2. What means can multilingual couples employ to negotiate oppositional stances?

After reviewing the relevant literature, the explanations for setting these research questions are provided below. In order to answer to what extent the intimate relationship is impacted, and how when disagreement occurs in multilingual couples' conversations, the process of their negotiation needs to be examined. Thus, the thesis investigates how disagreement begins, maintains, and resolves during multilingual couples' interaction. What factors are relevant to support or contradict the hypothesis that disagreement does not necessarily result in damaging the intimate relationship,

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<sup>8</sup> Pragmatic competence refers to one aspect of communicative competence, which enables second language speakers to use their language resources to convey and interpret the meanings in real situations (Littlewood, 2006, p503).

but might in fact cultivate it instead? The first question is designed to identify the relevance and consequence of whether cultural differences, language proficiency, or national identity could be the main trigger of disagreement and damage the marital relationship based on the knowledge of research in bi/multilingual intercultural couples. Following Jaffe's sociolinguistic view of stancetaking, the data analysis is conducted under the contextual and indexical principles and examines how multilingual couples draw on resources and repertoires to signal and negotiate their oppositional positions during interaction. In order to provide a new perspective of intercultural communication, this thesis presents stancetaking as a framework and interactional sociolinguistics (IS) analysis to elucidate the association between discourse strategies and the couples' disagreement.

Given that people engaging in disagreement discourse employ strategies to achieve agreement and aim at resolving stance differences, the second question attempts to reveal how the strategies are used, as well as the functions of a particular discourse strategy in different phases of disagreement. Whether the strategic use of multilingual couples is similar to or differs from previous studies, and if the expectation of the outcome of disagreement in the intimate relationship is the same as in other domain will be investigated in detail. Specific attention is paid to couples' language choices and code switching patterns. Additionally, gender differences in the strategic performance will be discussed. How disagreement ends and its consequence in multilingual couples' relationship will be examined based on empirical evidence. In all, the analysis of episodes will provide original insight into how multilingual couples deal with the oppositional stances, as well as what strengthens the bonds and what causes harm to the intimate relationship in the disagreement.

## 2.7 Summary

This chapter has been devoted to the literature review of bilingual couples, stance-taking, disagreement in intimate relationship, and a particular set of discourse strategies relevant to disagreement, including code-switching, vocatives, topic shifts, apology, questioning, humour, silence, and the discourse marker *well*, swear words, gender and indirectness. These factors clearly identified in the previous research have contributed to constructing the conceptual framework of this study. The review of previous research provides an important insight into my research questions. The next chapter will describe the methodology and the participants' biographical information.

### **3. Chapter 3. Methodology and Couples' Profiles**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to elucidate the methodology used in the current study, including pilot study, the process of data collection, how the examples were selected, transcribing methods, and how interactional sociolinguistics is employed as a method to analyse the real life communication between multilingual couples. It also provides some essential biographical information about the couples. This chapter is organised as follows: methodology is provided in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 details the data collection, involving a brief overview of inter-ethnic marriage surveys in the UK and Taiwan, questionnaires, and ethical issues. Both the secondary data sources and the primary data collected are utilised to understand and interpret the findings. Section 3.4 describes the process of approaching the couples, and the difficulties I encountered. Section 3.5 gives an account of the analytic approach in the discourse. Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is chosen to illustrate and substantiate the richness of actual disagreement interaction, because IS concentrates on speech exchanges involving two or more individuals to achieve their communication goals in real-life situations, but takes a broader view of language as communicating both content and indexical information about content (Gumperz, 2001; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2008). The accounts for how the extracts in later chapters are chosen and the categorisation used in the data analysis are also provided in this section. Lastly, apart from the methods, background information about the couples will be provided in Section 3.6.

### **3.2 Rationale behind the Methodology**

The approach to this study and data collection is largely sociolinguistic, and is particularly centred on the method of obtaining naturally-occurring conversations. Piller provides an overview of methodological issues in the linguistic practices of bilingual couples and categorises them into seven groups: census data, questionnaires, interviews, experimental studies, ethnography of communication, fictional sources, and introspection (2001). In my research, census data, questionnaires, and introspection are used. My approach is centred on the method of obtaining naturally-occurring conversations, and questionnaires and national surveys are used to provide backup accounts for IS analysis. An overview of inter-ethnic marriages in the UK and Taiwan is provided through the governmental statistics reports. I use the surveys as a secondary source to account for the gender imbalance found in my multilingual couples' data. It also helps us to draw attention to a specific group: Taiwanese nationals. The data collection begins with the design of a questionnaire, wherein I obtain the background information of the couples. The biographical information is needed in order to compliment the analysis, in particular with respect to the couples' language choices, perceptions of disagreement, and identities. Although it is obtained through self report, it is useful to have the information as a point of reference to reflect the validity of the data.

The couples are not aware of the focus on disagreement, for the purpose of insuring the conversations are naturally occurring ones, given that the information they obtain is about multilingual couples' language use in daily conversations. They are required to record their daily conversations, regardless of the topic, for at least forty-five minutes. In most of the cases, I met the participants in person in order to explain the



questionnaire and how to use the recorder, with some exceptional cases of communication via email, telephone or post, when an instruction manual of the audio recorder was attached. The participants had complete control over when and where to record their conversations, including when to press the record button and stop the device. I was not present during any of the recordings in order to obtain the conversations under natural circumstances. The audio recorders were given to the couples in advance, and were afterwards returned to me.

The reason behind the choice of audio recordings as the method to obtain the naturally-occurring conversations between multilingual couples is that the audio recorder appears to be less interruptive. Six digital voice recorders were purchased or borrowed for the purpose of recording different couples' conversations simultaneously. Before the data can be analysed, they require being organised for the purpose of being observed, processed, and presented (Moyers, 2008). The conversations are actual instances of discourse, which need to be transferred into a written form, transcription of audio recording, for analytical purposes. Transcription is treated as the first step in interpreting and analysing data (Turell & Moyer, 2008). The recordings have been transcribed using the programmes Express Scribe and QSR NVivo 10 to digitalise the material. Some of the conversations are in English, others are in Mandarin Chinese, Hokkien, Japanese, Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Urdu, but most of them are characterized by code-switching between the languages. Standard English orthography was used to transcribe speeches in English, and for the transcriptions of the other languages I have chosen to present all the recorded data in the original language followed by their translations into English.

The transcription system used in this study is based on Atkinson and Heritage's

transcript notation (1984), with some modification (for transcription conventions, see page 10). Although the prosody (sound, rhythm, tone, accent) is one of the powerful resources in bilingual conversations, it will not be discussed in my analysis, given that the phonological properties are not the main concern in this thesis, and also due to the focus of the present investigation. All transcription systems are selective, and this convention is chosen because it is concerned with capturing sequential features of talks (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). The English translation of the extracts will be shown in a pair of brackets【 】, either under the original transcriptions or parallel to the code-switching parts. The corpus of multilingual couples' conversations stand at 156,664 transcribed words (16 hours and 25 minutes) at the time of the analysis.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

#### **3.3.1 Survey**

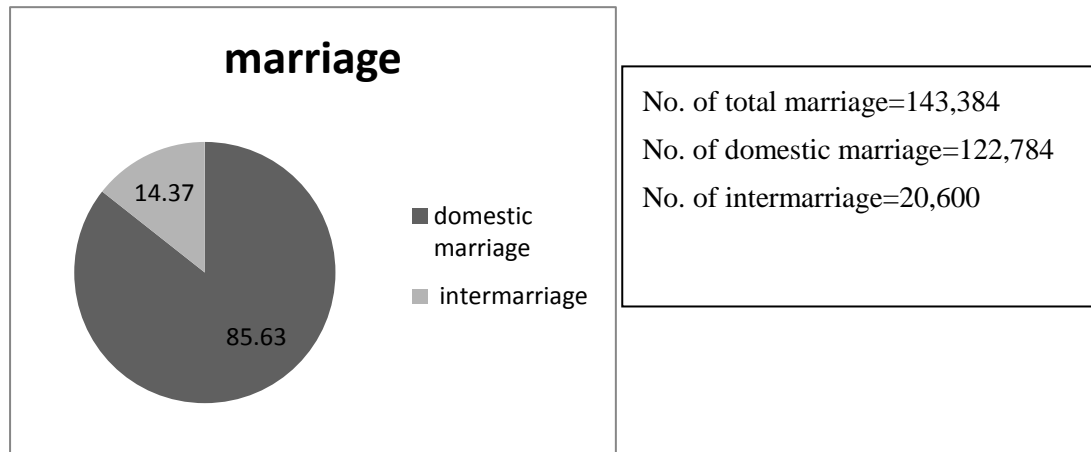
In the year 2012, the registered case number of foreigners in intercultural multilingual marriages in Taiwan was 7887, which is 5.5% of total marriages (n=143,384) according to the Department of Statistics of the Ministry of the Interior. One of every 6 couples is intermarriage (14.37:85.63, Figure 3-1). Figure 3-2 shows that the number of female foreign spouses is 1.4 times more than the male ones. Nearly 60% of the intermarriages in Taiwan are made up of foreign wives (59.16%) and the majority are from Southeast Asia<sup>9</sup>. However, among other nationals, including the second and third largest groups, Japan and USA, it is the husbands that make up the

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<sup>9</sup> Southeast Asia is a geographical subregion of Asia, including the Malay Archipelago and the Indochinese Peninsula. Southeast Asian countries include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos according to the Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior. The category of foreign spouses based on the Interior Statistics report is divided into two main groups, which are from Mainland China or other Foreign nationals. The subgroups of other Foreign national are divided into Southeast Asia and Other countries. In this study, the case of Southeast Asia is excluded.

majority of the number of intermarriages.

*Figure 3-1* The ratio of national and international marriage in Taiwan



Source: Monthly Bulletin of Interior Statistics in Taiwan (July, 2013)

*Figure 3-2* Number of foreign spouses according to nations in Taiwan (2012)

Nation			number	
	(regional order)		groom	bride
1	Southeast Asia	<b>4784</b>	664	4120
2	Japan	<b>862</b>	660	202
6	Korea	<b>197</b>	133	64
3	U.S.A.	<b>808</b>	691	117
5	Canada	<b>205</b>	164	41
7	Australia	<b>172</b>	147	25
11	New Zealand	<b>29</b>	25	4
8	UK	<b>144</b>	134	10
9	France	<b>122</b>	116	6
10	German	<b>100</b>	95	5

	Nation (regional order)		number	
			groom	bride
12	South Africa	<b>36</b>	28	8
4	Others	<b>425</b>	362	63
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7887</b>	<b>3221</b>	<b>4666</b>

*Figure 3-3 Number of foreign spouses in UK (2009)*

	Nation	number
1.	India	13,985
2.	Pakistan	13,035
3.	Bangladesh	4,410
4.	Philippines	3,070
5.	China *	3,025
6.	Nigeria	2,710
7.	South Africa	2,690
8.	USA	2,360
9.	Turkey	2,115
10.	Thailand	1,840
11.	Afghanistan	1,760
12.	Ghana	1,685

\* includes Taiwan

Source: Home Office Migration research and analysis

Similarly, the report of the UK Home Office for National Statistics<sup>10</sup> indicates that

<sup>10</sup> *International Migration Review* (2012). volume 46, number 4. pp.861-890.

wives make up the majority of migrants granted spousal settlement in the UK, but there is a considerable variation of gender ratio between different nation groups. In the year 2009, Chinese nationals accounted for one of the top 5 largest migrant groups (n=3025), and 83% were wives. It is worth noting in this connection that spouses make up the largest single category of migrant settlement in the UK (40% in 2009, Home Office 2010). Single migrants who meet a partner, spouses who follow or accompany labour, or student migrants who later settle, probably account for the majority of Chinese immigrants who marry transnationally.

The three figures above provide a varied picture of international marriage in Taiwan and the UK. The gender ratio explains why the majority of Taiwanese participants in my data are female in both locations. There has been great interest in carrying out research about large migrant population, which is characterised by a focus on certain issues and regions of origin (South Asia in the UK and South East Asia in Taiwan). In this study, the emphasis is placed on different language uses with an attempt to extend the attention to encompass other nationals which have been neglected.

### **3.3.2     *Questionnaire***

Every couple received the questionnaire immediately after they agreed to participate in the research. The couples are requested to complete the questionnaire delivered in person, by email or by post, before they record their conversations. A questionnaire of participants' background information, including gender, age, education, languages, place of birth, parents' languages, length of stay, length of marriage, number of children, identity, and perceptions of argument, was provided in both Chinese and English (see Appendix). It is two pages long with eighteen questions, and most of the

questions are multiple choice items, except the last three which are related to opinions and attitudes. The purpose of this questionnaire is to map the important factors in multilingual couples' language use and identities, but is not the main focus of the data analysis. It is useful to have the background information when analysing the conversations during interaction. The questionnaire is anonymous, so gender is determined by whether the participant is a wife or a husband. Age can be answered by range (every ten years) they belong to if they prefer not to provide their actual age. Place of birth is used to indicate the majority languages he or she might speak. The languages the participant has learned include his or her mother tongue, and the languages their parents can speak. There is a relevant question later on about which language the participant uses to communicate with his or her parents in law. For indication of their socio-economic background, "education" and "occupation" are required. There are four options for occupation, namely employee, student, househusband or housewife, and other. The length of stay in the country (UK or Taiwan) is designed for the variable of impact on learning the majority language spoken. How long the partnership has been, serves the purpose of determining whether there is a positive relation between language learning and intimate relationship. Followed by three questions of language use and acquisition, participants are asked which language they use to talk to their spouse, child if any, and parents in law. If s/he has learned the other half's mother tongue, the length and the start time, as well as the method of learning need to be identified. Two open questions are related to perceptions of disagreement: "How do you feel when your spouse uses his or her mother tongue to argue", and "How different do you feel when you argue in other languages, compared to your mother tongue". Lastly, the participant needs to write down his or her national identity. I was not present for any of the recordings when the conversations took place. Therefore, the accompanying contextual information in the

analysis is based on the questionnaire, or the interviews conducted during the pilot study.

### **3.3.3 *Naturally-occurring Conversation***

All the participants were fully aware of being audio-recorded in advance, when they agreed to participate in the research, and the audio device was not concealed during the recording. However, it did happen that when one participant pressed the button to start recording, his or her spouse was not reminded. In a number of episodes, the conversations were interrupted because one participant realised he or she had been recorded. There are pros and cons for the method employed. For instance, technical issues are one of the drawbacks. Not everyone is familiar with the audio recorder. Although the manual of the device was provided with the package, some of the participants still found it difficult to use. Some audio files only contain five to eight minutes because the participants do not know how to use the device properly. Therefore, the conversation is either not complete or the talk is discontinuous. Another unexpected issue was that the device itself becomes the source of the disagreement, when participants are unaware of the recording, or feel uncertain regarding the function of the device. Secondly, the noise of the surroundings is inevitable during the recording, when their young children are with the couple, or because of the background, such as the sound of wind or television. Participants do not usually test the quality of voice when they record. Therefore, many of the recordings are accompanied with sound disturbance. In those cases that I met the couples in person, participant observations were carried out. The strength and drawbacks of asking about their background information in person include the validity of the expressions I observed, or the recording represented. Participants may

perform differently because the third party is physically present. The same holds true for the recording when the participants are conscious of the device. One spouse even confesses that he wants his wife to sound stupid in the conversation recorded. Despite the fact that the conversations are all naturally occurring, it is inevitable that there will be some slightly different performance, when the participants are aware that their conversations will be heard by the researcher.

In addition, the procedure for sending back the recorder can be time consuming. As mentioned earlier, participants possess the absolute power to decide the moment to start and stop the recording. Despite the fact that the participants can be reminded, they remain in charge of when to send the device back. For instance, one of the couples spent one month recording their conversations, whereas another couple delayed their participation for a whole three months.

#### **3.3.4     *Ethical Considerations***

The participants were notified what participation in the project implies. The couples received a brief introduction to the research, including who the researcher is, what the research topic is about, the aim and procedure of carrying out the project, and contact information as well as a questionnaire. The brief and the questionnaire were written in both Chinese and English. The couples who participated were well informed and had given their consent for the realisation of the project, provided that directly identifiable personal data, such as their names, were made anonymous in the transcriptions, whereas indirectly identifiable data, personal details and their audio recordings, were not to be made available to anyone else except the researcher. Couples were aware that the information would be used for research purposes only, and all names are



pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants. Some geographical names in the data have also been changed to prevent couples from being identified.

### **3.4 Approaching the Couples and Pilot Study**

#### **3.4.1 *Approaching the Couples***

Given that disagreement discourse between couples is clearly confidential, it is challenging to have access to such data, particularly in the private domain. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are valid and valuable as long as it can best address the research questions. It is commonly acknowledged that qualitative approach better suits samples which represent people's opinions and experiences, as well as being preferable for naturally occurring data (Li & Moyer, 2008). Examples of private and intimate language are not readily available for data collection (Deignan, 1997; Piller, 2001, p. 200). In order to obtain and investigate the conversations of multilingual couples, the methods employed are of primary importance. Social networks, such as events organised by the Taiwanese Representative Office, religious fellowships, internet forums, and personal connections are useful to approach the target group. Before the target is reached, the researcher encountered several disappointments during the pilot study. At the planning stage of my research, three personal friends had been asked to participate in the recording process, and two of them rejected the request soon after based on the fact that their other half was reluctant to be recorded or was concerned about their privacy.

In order to approach the right target, I had to establish contacts without any prior acquaintances in the UK. Social networking in cyber space and organisational

activities are good resources to begin with. I originally posted an advertisement to a special group on Hello UK, an internet forum for Taiwanese people who immigrate to the UK, where two couples contacted me actively. There were three replies to my request on the forum and people who showed interest in the project ended up either participating in the research themselves, or introducing their acquaintances to participate. Positive responses were received soon after sending a request to the Taiwanese Representative Office in London for relevant contacts. The Representative Office provided information about the European-Chinese Family Association, which is organised and run by overseas Taiwanese citizens who have immigrated to Britain. Despite obtaining access to the Association, the first few emails sent to the President and Vice President seemed to have been sent in vain. The most efficient way of contacting the members of the Association was to meet in person, given that they were engaged in the social events actively. By making an effort to attend Taiwanese Annual Sports Day, and a concert performed by Taiwanese musicians, three pairs of participants agreed to take part in the research project.

Personal connections can also be a useful approach for the purpose of finding participants, especially in academic surroundings. A number of colleagues of mine and their partners participated in the research, and furthermore, they put me in contact with other intermarried academics, including those who happen to have Taiwanese spouses. Fortunately, many academics showed their kindness and generosity to participate in my study. Academics are generally interested in contributing to research projects, and they are more willing to help junior researchers, given that they have the knowledge and understanding of the process of data collection.

The second part of data collection located in my homeland, Taiwan, was hardly an

easier process. By using all the contacts available, the Netherlands Education Support Office, friends, neighbours, colleagues, even through a television programme, finally there were eleven couples who promised to participate, and all recordings were done within three months (August to October, 2010). In Taiwan, all the participants are found through personal connections. An attempt at contacting strangers to participate resulted in failure, because it requires trust when the subject involves privacy. Two couples are my neighbours' acquaintances, and six are friends' relatives or their friends. The researcher made use of her social network at the Netherlands Education Support Office (NESO) in Taipei, and Taiwan-Norway Association to find two more couples. One participant, a regular guest appearing in a television programme specialising on the topic of immigrants in Taiwan on account of her marriage, was introduced to me by an employee working for the television station, in response to a Facebook<sup>11</sup> post. After obtaining their contact information, the next step was to obtain their spouses' permissions. Not everyone is predisposed to accepting the request for being recorded. There were proposals turned down by the other half, and they had to withdraw. At the end, there were twenty-one couples in total who agreed to participate. More than 23 hours of conversations were recorded and transcribed from 11 couples in Taiwan and 10 couples in England respectively.

### **3.4.2 Pilot Study**

From December 2009 to January 2010, a series of pilot studies in London, Woking and Brighton were performed with six couples interviewed and audio recorded. I also kept my observer dairy every time. In the pilot study, participants were acquaintances

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<sup>11</sup> Facebook is the largest social networking media in the United States and Europe with the highest penetration among Internet users in 2012 according to José van Dijck (2013). *The Culture of Connectivity. A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford University Press..

of the researcher to access the target with ease. The first interview was held in the surroundings of a social event at the couple's house. The couple were busy hosting the guests, and the recording was done whilst guests were around. Therefore, the very early recordings turned out to be inferior given that there was inevitable intervention from other people. The conversations provided very little disagreement and recording quality was poor. Knowing that it is difficult to concentrate on social occasions, such as parties, the researcher requested a quiet and private space for later interviewees. After solving the technical problem, another factor which had to be taken into account was that participants' answers did not always correspond to what actually happened. They might perform differently due to the presence of the researcher. For instance, in the interview, participants state that they speak only one language, whereas code switching is frequently found in the recording. Indeed, speakers may not be able to report accurately on their own language behaviour (Milroy, 2003, p. 200). It also revealed that a few participants are not comfortable talking about their private relationship with an outsider. In order to obtain the best result from a natural environment, I abandoned the method of interview, and decided not to be present when the couples record their conversations. Although the result of the early task seemed unsuccessful, the trial experience was beneficial to the research design. During the pilot study, interview questions, as well as enquiry skills were modified and improved. The interviews were useful for the design of later questionnaires. Additionally, the couples who participated in the pilot study continued to take part in the fieldwork, or assisted me with the contacts of other multilingual couples.

My setting for the multilingual couples is one Chinese speaker with his or her foreign partner. The Chinese language is used as a control variable for participants in an English-speaking country, and in a Chinese-speaking country respectively. In Taiwan,

Mandarin Chinese is the official language widely spoken, while large segments of the population also speak other Sinitic languages, such as Southern Min (approximately 70% of the population), and Hakka (20%), in addition to Austronesian languages spoken by Taiwan's indigenous groups. Both Southern Min (also known as Holo, Hokkien) and Hakka are varieties of Chinese language related to those spoken in Southern China and in Chinese communities throughout the Pacific Rim (Government Information Office, 2012). Therefore, the variety of languages provided bilingual setting for participants from Taiwan. Undoubtedly, the fact that the researcher has the same nationality also facilitated the process of building up new contacts. Multilingual couples in this research were chosen so that one spouse comes from Taiwan, and the other half is from a different country, where other languages are spoken. One group of participants is based in an English speaking country, England, and the other group lives in Taiwan, where the majority of people speak Chinese.

### **3.5 Interactional Sociolinguistics**

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is an approach described as the application of interpretive methods to discourse analysis in order to gain insight into social/ cultural issues by systematically looking at how speakers and listeners talk about them (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2007). IS “has its origin in the search for replicable methods of qualitative analysis that account for our ability to **interpret** what participants intend to convey in everyday communicative practice” (Gumperz, 2001, p. 215, emphasis added). Interactional sociolinguistics has its focus on discourse strategies, and the way people are empowered as rhetorical agents, who could learn how to analyse their own and others' interactional styles (Johnstone, 2008). Gumperz (2001) argues that turn-by-turn sequential analysis by itself is not sufficient to account

for situated interpretation, and suggests an interactional sociolinguistic approach where the procedures are applied to inferencing. Gumperz's concept refers to "assessments of communicative intent [which] at any one point in an exchange take the form of hypotheses that are either **confirmed or rejected** in the course of the exchange... not just to determine what is meant, but to discover how interpretive assessments relate to the linguistic signaling processes through which they are negotiated" (Gumperz, 2001, p.218, emphasis added). Intercultural communication is better exemplified through conducting a micro analysis of the conversation as the tactics emerge through the interaction. IS research typically begins with participant observation and interview in selected settings to obtain insight into communicative conventions and ideologies of interpersonal relations, and then collects tape or video recordings (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 2007). Therefore, IS is a fruitful methodology for answering questions of how multilingual couples do things in talk, such as studying how disagreements are constructed. For instance, interactional sociolinguistic analysis can explore how communicative intent is assessed through languages, and how couples make emotional and identity-related claims. One resource that serves as a communicative strategy to achieve the interpretive effects is code-switching, which provides initial insights into the role of language use in inferential processes (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Gumperz, 2001).

Both conversation analysis and discourse analysis have been criticised for emphasising utterly trivial features of turn-taking in mundane conversation and failing to address core sociological issues, such as power, gender, and class (Wooffitt, 2005). Gumperz's IS adopts the focus on members' procedures from conversation analysis and points out that although sequential positioning of turns at speaking is an important input to conversational inference, other analytically prior factors are also involved

(2001). Goffman (1981, 1989) argues that interaction must be seen as a separate level of communicative organisation, and be analysed in terms of its own analytic units at language level and in interaction. Naturally occurring conversation is a form of social practice within a socio-cultural context. Goffman's and Gumperz's work attempt to bridge the linguistic and the social through the interactive processes. As Gumperz argues, all communication is intended and grounded in inferences where the context-specific background knowledge is shared (2001). Analysts must go beyond surface meaning to fill in what is left unsaid to assess what is intended (*ibid*). The researcher's interpretation is perhaps not the only possible one, especially when certain background knowledge is not shared. With this caveat in mind, other analytically prior factors are as important as the sequential positioning of turns at speaking when interpreting conversational inferences.

### ***3.5.1 Translation of the Multilingual Conversations***

Due to the fact that the participants are from different nationalities, the conversations chosen in the extracts occurring in languages other than English have been translated in order to facilitate the analysis. The extent and nature of translation work depends on the premises of the researcher's analytical framework, which is the relationship between discourse strategies and disagreement. The translations of the empirical material need to be checked by other bilingual speakers only when they fit in the framework. Conversations recorded with no disagreements have been set apart. The translations of German, Spanish, and Urdu into English were done by three bi/multilingual speakers who are fluent in the languages, whereas Mandarin and Southern-Min conversations are translated by myself without further assistance. The three translators include two linguists and a personal friend who is fluent in Spanish.

Two of them are colleagues I met at seminars held in my own department, and they kindly assist me with German and Urdu translations. The translator for Urdu has a PhD in linguistics and specialises in the Pakistani community. She has studied Urdu for several years. German extracts are translated by the English/ French/ German trilingual who is a native German speaker and has a master's degree in applied linguistics from the UK. Both of them are familiar with translating transcriptions. Transcriptions involving Spanish were done by a personal friend from high school, who immigrated to Spain more than a decade ago. She is fluent in Chinese, English, and Spanish, and has a master's degree in education from USA.

Apart from the translation, it also takes time to get used to different accents of the multilingual couples to render the transcriptions correctly because there is significant individual variation even for participants who speak fluent English or Chinese.

### **3.5.2      *Procedures and Rationales for Data Selection***

In principle, most of the audible conversations are transcribed, except the recordings which are not relevant or had no disagreement. For example, a conversation between one participant and his daughters has been crossed out for transcription. A total of 120 disagreement episodes are found in the data, and 98 extracts are selected for the analysis. I have closely examined all the conversations as part of my own attempt to construct a framework for multilingual couples' discourse strategies in later analysis (Chapters 4 to 7). The examples were chosen if the episodes (1) fit in the A-B-A structure of oppositional turns, and (2) reflected specific strategies the couples employed to begin, maintain or resolve the disagreement.



### 3.5.3 *Method of Classifying Discourse Strategies*

According to Grimshaw, the operation of conflict talk is treated as a social process by social scientists, whereas linguists are interested in how language works, and which conflict talk is likely to occur under what conditions (1990). A number of important studies have investigated how conflict talk is terminated (Vuchinich, 1990; Leung, 2002; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). I divide disagreement into three main stages: the initial stage, the maintenance stage, and the resolution stage, according to the procedure of constructing a disagreement episode to examine how disagreement is initiated, maintained, and ended. Through such structural criteria, functions are assigned to discourse strategies. Each stage constitutes different strategies, specifying the conditions under which a disagreement episode may be categorised. There are numerous ways of initiating and maintaining disagreement, but only those strategies that occur frequently in the recordings and may only be found in multilingual couples' conversations are selected for this study. The categories of discourse strategies are certainly far from ideal and not watertight or mutually exclusive. However, it is useful to set a benchmark for analysis given that classifying speech produced by bilinguals is an important analytical step, and a classification can be a means of codifying and facilitating cross-context comparison (Castaños, 1981; Moyer, 2008).

In the initial stage, where disagreement begins, vocatives, the discourse marker *well*, apology and complaint are the strategies used to indicate oppositions. Multilingual couples oftentimes address their partners by their first names, endearment terms or relationship appellations for the purposes of a disagreement context. Vocatives are listed in both initiating and maintenance stages, either functioning as an indicator or softener. The high number of the occurrence of the DM *well* in the recording makes it

significant in the data. Complaint itself can be seen as an act to provoke the other participant into a heated discussion as it invites disagreement. Although apology occurs merely four times in the data, it is worth noting that apology appears in conjunction with the marker *but* to contradict the previous statement. These four strategies are chosen given that they provide clear evidence of upcoming disagreement and the interlocutors receive the signals immediately.

*Table 3-1* The discourse strategies in three stages of disagreement

Disagreement		Discourse strategies				
Stages						
Initial	Vocatives	DM <i>well</i>	Apology		Complaint	
	indicator of undesirable answers or introducing a different stance					
Maintenance	Aggravated disagreement		Mitigated disagreement			
	Swear words	Reference to nationality		Humour		
	Questioning		Indirectness		Vocatives	
Resolution	Withdrawal	Dominant third-party intervention	Compromise	Submission	Stand-off	Topic shift

In the maintenance stage, there are two subcategories, namely aggravated disagreement and mitigated disagreement strategies. It is similar to Kakava's (1993) categories from mitigation to aggravation. After disagreement is established, one can decide to mitigate or to aggravate the opposition. Swearing and questioning are the types to intensify the situation, whereas vocatives, humour and indirectness are used to soften the negotiation. The classification may serve as a benchmark for analysis,

but is by no means absolute. For example, reference to nationality can function as either an aggravated strategy or a softener, depending on the context. In the resolution stage, I modify Vuchinich's (1990) classifications, and single out topic shift as the sixth format of terminating multilingual couples' disagreement. Besides, code-switching, the most readily available communicative resource for multilingual speakers, can occur in any of the stages along with other strategies. Therefore, it will be discussed in a separate chapter together with oppositional stancetaking.

### **3.6 The couples**

On the basis of the questionnaire, forty-two participants' biographical information is presented below, including their age, education, occupation, languages spoken, length of marriage and number of children. The data analysis has to take the participants' historical, ideological, and economic backgrounds into account to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the context.

#### **3.6.1 *Couples' Profiles***

According to the questionnaire, the couples are mostly from a higher education background, as twenty of the participants have bachelor's degrees, ten have master's degrees, and nine of them possess PhD degrees (Table 3-2). The participants' age range is between 20 to 60 years. Twenty of them are in their 30s, which accounts for nearly half of the participants. 33% of participants are in their 40s. The number of the youngest (20 to 30) and those aged more than fifty years old are three (7%) and four (9%) respectively. As far as their occupation is concerned, twenty-seven participants have a part time or full time job, and six are students. There are five participants who

indicated that they are self-employed, and four described themselves as housewife/husband. All of the participants are bi/multilingual speakers. The average length of marriage is eight years. 12 of them have children, plus two of the couples were expecting their first babies. Among the foreign spouses of Taiwanese people, British nationals were the largest group with 6 participants, whereas the others came from a variety of nationalities as Table 3-2 illustrates. The next section provides the participants' essential biographical information and the list of couples is organized in alphabetical order of their made-up names. Couples from number 1 to 10 live in the UK, and number 11 to 21 live in Taiwan (TW).

*Table 3-2 Couples' profile*

Couple's names	Nationality	Age	Education	Main languages
1.Andy / Pisces	South African	38	Bachelor	English and Chinese
	Taiwanese	38	Masters	
2.Elko / Winnie	Dutch	47	Bachelor	English
	Taiwanese	52	Masters	
3.George/ Ingrid	British	45	Bachelor	English
	Taiwanese	44	Bachelor	
4.Gregoire / Sophie	French	31	PhD	English
	Taiwanese	34	PhD	
5.Hamish / Ruby	Irish	28	PhD	English
	Taiwanese	25	Masters	
6.Howard / Tiffany	British	35	Masters	English
	Taiwanese	35	Masters	

Couple's names	Nationality	Age	Education	Main languages
7.Ken / Fanny	British	40	PhD	Chinese and English
	Taiwanese	50	Masters	
8.Steven / Gina	British	40s	Bachelor	Chinese and English
	Taiwanese	40s	Bachelor	
9.Tom / Cindy	British	40s	PhD	English
	Taiwanese	39	PhD	
10.Tony / Maria	Taiwanese	36	PhD	Chinese and English
	Italian/Taiwanese	38	Bachelor	
11.Ali / Chin	American	30s	Masters	Chinese and English
	Taiwanese	30s	Bachelor	
12.Eirik / Sally	Norwegian	59	Bachelor	Chinese and German with some English
	Taiwanese	50	Masters	
13.Fabrice / Kate	French	30s	Bachelor	English
	Taiwanese	30s	Bachelor	
14.Henry / Ayi	Pilipino	30s	Bachelor	Chinese and Southern Min
	Taiwanese	30s	High school	
15.John / Olivia	British	20s	Masters	English
	Taiwanese	30s	PhD	
16.Kimura / Tina	Japanese	40s	PhD	Chinese and Japanese
	Taiwanese	40s	Masters	
17.Monsoekser /Fiona	Nigerian	40s	Bachelor	Chinese
	Taiwanese	40s	Bachelor	
18. Paola / Bjorn	Uruguayan	30s	High school	Chinese
	Taiwanese	40s	High school	

Couple's names	Nationality	Age	Education	Main languages
19. Saied / Zoe	Pakistani	40s	Bachelor	Chinese
	Taiwanese	30s	Bachelor	
20. Steven / Judith	Canadian	40s	Bachelor	Chinese
	Taiwanese	30s	Bachelor	
21. Vladimir/ Jenny	Russian	37	Bachelor	English and Chinese
	Taiwanese	34	Bachelor	

In addition to the biographical information, the participants were asked to answer two open questions: (1) How do you perceive/ feel when your partner uses a different language to argue? (See Table 3-3), and (2) What is your identity? (See Table 3-4) The term “argue” (爭執 in Chinese version) is used in the first open question on the questionnaire as intense disagreement to assist the couples in understanding the opposition. In this section, I will provide the answers they give for these two questions in the questionnaire to show the impression I gained from each couple before the data analysis. The descriptions result from the questionnaires the participants filled out, interviews, observations diary, and conversations recorded.

*Table 3-3* Couples' perceptions of disagreement when their partners use other languages (Lx)

Couple's names	Nationality	Perceptions of Disagreement in L(x)
1.Andy /	South African	Feel in trouble
Pisces	Taiwanese	Normal
2.Elko /	Dutch	Sometimes I feel excluded.
Winnie	Taiwanese	Fine, I will use Chinese if he uses Dutch.

Couple's names	Nationality	Perceptions of Disagreement in L(x)
3.George/	British	Taiwanese people are always shouting.
Ingrid	Taiwanese	Disadvantaged
4.Gregoire /	French	Never happened
Sophie	Taiwanese	Never happened
5.Hamish /	Irish	I am in trouble.
Ruby	Taiwanese	Disadvantaged
6.Howard /	British	Silly
Tiffany	Taiwanese	No difference.
7.Ken /	British	Natural
Fanny	Taiwanese	Normal
8.Steven /	British	Fair
Gina	Taiwanese	Funny
9.Tom /	British	Didn't happen
Cindy	Taiwanese	Incapable of expressing myself in full
10.Tony /	Taiwanese	I will reply in Japanese.
Maria	Italian/Taiwanese	No difference
11.Ali /	American	Weaker
Chin	Taiwanese	I won't understand
12.Eirik /	Norwegian	Exhausted
Sally	Taiwanese	Funny
13.Fabrice /	French	Weaker
Kate	Taiwanese	I don't mind.
14.Henry /	Filipino	Disadvantaged
Ayi	Taiwanese	Amused
15.John /	British	Aggressive
Olivia	Taiwanese	Sometimes I need to ask him to speak slowly.
16.Kimura /	Japanese	It's alright.
Tina	Taiwanese	Never happen
17.Monsoekser/	Nigerian	Frustrated
Fiona	Taiwanese	It's not a big deal.

Couple's names	Nationality	Perceptions of Disagreement in L(x)
18. Paola /	Uruguayan	Funny
Bjorn	Taiwanese	Funny
19. Saied /	Pakistani	Frustrated, and I wish my wife can speak Urdu.
Zoe	Taiwanese	I'll be angry as I think he tries to avoid the
20. Steven /	Canadian	I feel disadvantaged, but it's fair.
Judith	Taiwanese	Frustrated
21. Vladimir/	Russian	More diplomatic and mild
Jenny	Taiwanese	Never happened

*Table 3-4 Couples' identities*

Couple's names	Nationality	Self Identities
1.Andy /	South African	South African
Pisces	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
2.Elko /	Dutch	Dutch
Winnie	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
3.George/	British	British
Ingrid	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
4.Gregoire /	French	French
Sophie	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
5.Hamish /	Irish	Irish
Ruby	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
6.Howard /	British	British
Tiffany	Taiwanese	Twenglish (Taiwanese and English)
7.Ken /	British	British and Taiwanese
Fanny	Taiwanese	Taiwanese and British
8.Steven /	British	British
Gina	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
9.Tom /	British	British
Cindy	Taiwanese	Taiwanese and little British
10.Tony /	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
Maria	Italian/Taiwanese	Italian



Couple's names	Nationality	Self Identities
11.Ali /	American	American
Chin	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
12.Eirik /	Norwegian	Norwegian
Sally	Taiwanese	Banana
13.Fabrice /	French	French
Kate	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
14.Henry /	Filipino	I don't know.
Ayi	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
15.John /	British	English
Olivia	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
16.Kimura /	Japanese	Japanese
Tina	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
17.Monsoekser/	Nigerian	Nigerian
Fiona	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
18. Paola /	Uruguayan	Uruguayan
Bjorn	Taiwanese	Nigerian
19. Saied /	Pakistani	Pakistani and Taiwanese
Zoe	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
20. Steven /	Canadian	Canadian
Judith	Taiwanese	Taiwanese
21. Vladimir/	Russian	None
Jenny	Taiwanese	Taiwanese

### 3.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have accounted for my data collection by describing the process of access to participants, recording, transcribing, IS analysis approach for the corpus of multilingual couples' interaction. The chapter describes how the difficulties were overcome in full, and provides the biographical information of the participants, which

can be used for reference purposes later in the extracts. My corpus is built on 23-hours of recorded conversations of twenty-one Taiwanese-foreign couples with various nationalities (see Table 3-2) in England and Taiwan. The following chapters will further analyse the corpus concerning the linguistic strategies of the disagreement between the couples on the practices found in the data.

## Chapter 4. Initiating and Maintaining Disagreement

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how multilingual couples begin their opposite propositions, and how their disagreement is managed in the discourse. Disagreement between couples seems to be fundamental in daily conversations, since it occurs naturally and frequently during the audio recording. In Section 3.5.2, I divide the disagreement process into three stages (initial, maintenance, and resolution), and assign different discourse strategies to each stage. The first two stages will be discussed below, and the final stage will be discussed in Chapter 6. The majority of extracts have been identified as oppositional stances in conversations between couples, yet in some instances of disagreement, their children or friends have also been recorded in the interaction. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the structure of disagreement is based on at least a three step sequence for accomplishing oppositional turns at talk (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998; Leung, 2001; Norrick & Spitz, 2008; among others). Following the A-B-A contradicting structure, the episodes are chosen for the purpose of demonstrating the linguistic strategies that have been used to initiate, maintain, or terminate the disagreement in the couples' dialogues (See Section 2.4). The chapter is organised as follows: First it begins with describing how the disagreement begins in terms of discourse strategies, and then moves on to the aggravated or mitigated disagreement, where the oppositional stances are maintained. Section 4.2 discusses how vocatives, discourse marker *well*, apology, and complaint project disagreement in the initial stage. Section 4.3 focuses on the management of disagreement, including aggravated strategies (questioning, swear words, and reference to nationality) and

mitigated strategies (reference to nationality, humour, vocatives, and indirectness). A total of 53 excerpts exhibiting initial oppositions and disagreement maintenance between couples will be analysed in this chapter.

## **4.2 Initiating Disagreement**

If any topic can be a source of disagreement, is there any cue that multilingual couples can signal their partners potential discord is coming? In situating the opening sequence of disagreement, some signals for projecting disagreement can be identified. In the following sections, I will demonstrate how four discourse strategies, namely vocatives in different languages, the discourse marker *well*, apology, and complaint, can all be employed to express upcoming discord.

### **4.2.1 Vocatives**

As discussed in Section 2.5.3, vocatives are a strategic device to identify the individuals to whom the utterance is addressed, for instance, first names or endearment terms (Haverkate, 1983; Fraser, 1990; Lee, 2008). It functions as an attention getter and puts forward the position of the conversant (Lee, 2008). Different forms of vocatives in conversation facilitate the interlocutors' realisation of emotions and expression of desire (Maynard, 2002). Endearment terms (baby, honey, sweetie), first names (Chinese names, English names), and relationship appellations (wife, husband) are vocatives found in the multilingual couples' disagreement. The addressing terms can occur in the initial, middle or end section of an utterance. In most of the cases, interlocutors use vocatives to mitigate the disagreement. However, vocatives can also be used to draw attention, express formality, and to signal to the

other participant that the coming utterance might be strong or undesirable. In this sense, vocative terms can be used as an indicator of disagreement. For instance, first names (Gregoire, 寶拉, 薩伊先生, Tony and 小芹), and endearment term (amour) serve this function as shown in Table 4-1. Individual spouses employ different addressing terms, even in the same turn, to serve different purposes. Sophie, Zoe, Maria, and Paola adopt this strategy to indicate to their husbands that they do not agree. On the other hand, only two husbands use first names to signal their wives about their discord. Interestingly, two names are translated into Chinese by their spouses. Zoe adds a title, mister, to her husband's first name to make it formal and by doing so, she shows that the discussion will be serious. The vocatives found in the multilingual couples' disagreement data are listed in the table below:

*Table4-1* Functions and numbers of occurrence of vocatives in couples' disagreement

Vocative	First name	Endearment term	Relationship appellation
Softener		honey, darling	太太, 老婆 (wife)
		sweetie, baby	爸爸 (father), 老公 (husband)
			老公 (husband)
Indicator	Gregoire	amour	
	薩伊(Saied),		
	薩伊先生 (Mr.		
	Saied), Tony,		
	小芹 (XiaoChin)		
	寶拉(Paola)		

Vocative	First name	Endearment term	Relationship appellation
	Ali, Tony		
Others (attention)	Steve, 小芹 (XiaoChin)	amour	老公 (husband)
	薩伊(Saied)		
total	23	10	14

Relationship appellations appear to be used most frequently, and are followed by the usage of first names in the multilingual couples' disagreement. Husbands and wives are the most common relationship appellations by which the couples address each other. Endearment terms occur ten times and are all uttered in either English or Spanish. However, the number of occurrences do not represent the exact use, given that some of the vocatives are employed by the same speaker. How the vocatives are employed as a means of doing disagreement needs to be examined in the discourse empirically. Seven extracts are selected to demonstrate the strategic use of vocatives, including first names (extracts 1, 5, 6, 7), endearment terms (extracts 1, 2), and relationship appellations (extracts 3, 4). For ease of reading, a few of the utterances in the analysis have been italicised to illustrate their particular use in the extracts. (See p.10 above for the relevant transcription conventions).

The first episode is chosen as a good example for showing three vocatives, including Chinese first name (小芹) and two endearment terms (baby, honey) in lines 563 and 564 in one speaker's turn. Ali, American husband and his Taiwanese wife, Chin are both in their mid 30's. Ali's Chinese is highly proficient, since he learned Chinese and stayed in China for a number of years. Before they moved back to Taiwan, Ali and

Chin had stayed in the UK, while Ali was working on his master's degree. Their language choice has been Chinese since they met, with some switches to English. The conversations occurred on a Saturday afternoon in their living room. In excerpt (1), Chin attempts to persuade her husband to lend her money to pay her credit card bill. The disagreement initiates with direct rejection of a request from Chin, when she asks for her husband's debit card. Ali responds with the Chinese turn initial token 不行 (*No*) immediately. Ali's question *what for* in the second turn is mitigated, which indicates that his stance is not inflexible. There is a noticeable pause in line 556, which indicates the discussion is becoming heated. When the topic of disagreement is related to financial matters, silence is more likely to be observed in the interaction (Oduro-Frimpong, 2011). After Chin's explanation, Ali asks her *how much do you need*, which can be interpreted as a signal of concession. He is prepared to lend his wife money under certain conditions. Interestingly, after she gives him the number she wants to transfer, Ali changes his mind. The concession offer is withdrawn. Their next two turn exchanges focus on different issues. Chin first provides a reason why she has less money in her bank account, which she then attributes to the fact that she paid for his flight ticket. This account is rejected as Ali counterclaims that he has already paid her back for purchasing the flight ticket.

In this particular episode, vocatives serve both the interpersonal and attentional functions (See modified Haverkate's model in Section 2.5.3). Two vocatives occur in the initial position of an utterance, while one is at the final position. Ali's sentence prefaced with addressing his wife's first name in Chinese (line 563) is to draw attention, and also serves as a signal for disagreement. As Lerner (2003) suggests, addressing the recipient by personal names highlights the local interactional force and invites a wayward recipient to attend the subsequent talk. The conversation is

conducted in Chinese before and after the vocatives. Ali switches to English, his L1, to enforce the disagreement. Notably, a cluster of endearment terms, *baby*, *honey*, are used immediately after the disagreement as a softener, followed by a noticeable long pause. Address terms are syntactically optional and each use represents a choice (Clayman, 2012). Ali tends to use a variety of endearment terms in his L1 to mitigate the disagreement, and his usage of first name is only to indicate the coming negative statement to his partner. Additionally, Ali attempts to soften the discord by indicating that he might not have enough money until the salary payment is transferred in two weeks' time. His explanation is not convincing for his wife, as she expresses her annoyance. The couple's disagreement remains at this moment. The negotiation of borrowing money returns later and Ali finally compromises.

(1)

549 C 我要拿你的提款卡 (0.5)

550 A 不行(..)

551 C 為什麼 「不行?」

552 A 「要幹嘛」

553 C 沒有我有跟你講我要存進到另外一個帳戶

554 A 妳要拿多少?

555 C 一-五千

556 (2.0)

557 A 不要跟我-

558 C 因為你說你還有一萬多(.)可是我已經-。沒有錢了。

559 因為->你的機票就三萬了<

560 (1.0)

561 A 可-(1.0)可 「我也給你」 我也給妳三萬塊 「了,不是」 嗎?



562 C L所以我才跟你J L那個是J 那存到那個-

563 → A 小芹, you can't take out my money, baby (2.0)

564 → Honey, 我現在還有-還有兩個禮拜才會收薪水

565 C (tsk) (2.0)

567 A 知道我意思嗎? (6.5)

568 我月初的時 (..) 可以給妳錢我就給妳 (.) 就是代表不能再給妳 (5.0)

569 妳知道我意思嗎?那不是我們的計劃嗎?

570 C (°H) (2.0)

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

549 C: 【I want to take your debit card. (0.5)

550 A: No! (..)

551 C: Why ɿnot? ɿ

552 A: LWhat for? J

553 C: No I have told you I am going to transfer money to another account.

554 A: How much will you take?

555 C: One - five thousand

556 (2.0)

557 A: Don't ask me-

558 C: Because you said you still have more than 10,000, but I already ran out of money.

559 Because->your flight ticket cost more than 30,000<

560 (1.0)

561 A: but:(1.0) ɿ I also gave you, ɿ I also gave you 30,000, ɿhaven'tɿ I?

562 C: LThat's why I ask youJ Lthat :was-J that transferred to the

563 → A: XiaoChin, you can't take out my money, baby (2.0)

564 → Honey, I now still have- two more weeks, I won't receive my payment until then.

565 C: (tsk) (2.0)

- 566        A:    (You) know what I mean? (6.5)
- 567                At the beginning of the month (..) (If) I could give you money, I would (..) that  
                          means I cannot give you anymore. (5.0)
- 568                You know what I mean? Isn't that our plan?
- 570        C:    (°H)    (2.0) 】

The two-second silence allows Ali to seize the floor and continue his explanation. By addressing her as *honey* again, he attempts to comfort his wife, and then offers a reason to support his rejection, *i.e.* that he has to wait for another two weeks to receive his wages. The endearment term serves the function of seeking sympathy from the interlocutor. Address terms can be used for projecting further talk and it appears to be syntactically complete, but prosodically incomplete as responses to troubles talk or related informings (Clayman, 2012, p. 1855-6). Chin disaligns herself with Ali by uttering a phonation 'tsk' to express her disapproval or annoyance in response, and then remains silent. This phonation is used as an instrumental device to show the speaker's mental state (Ameka, 2012), and to portend trouble, similar to interjections (Lerner, 2003). Ali's 知道我意思嗎 (*you know what I mean*) does not receive an agreement of any kind from his wife, but a long pause (6.5) instead. Later Ali refers to an epistemic stance based on previous knowledge that they had both agreed on the financial plan, which is that he can only transfer a certain amount of money to her account at the beginning of every month. The negotiation is carried on without reaching a solution for another minute.

(2)

- 479 → P    Amor 開慢一點喔 (2.0)
- 480        B    有啊↑！才九十而已耶？還不慢喔？(1.0)

481 P 好啦↓好啦↓.不要生氣嘛

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

479 → P: 【Amour, drive more slowly. (2.0)

480 B: (I) HAVE ↑ ! JUST 90 ONLY ye? STILL NOT SLOW ENOUGH? (1.0)

481 P: Alright ↓ , alright ↓ , don't get mad. 】

Excerpt (2) is taken from a conversation between an Uruguayan-Taiwanese couple, Paola and Bjorn, when they are driving on the freeway to central Taiwan. Paola and Bjorn's language choice is Chinese, with some Spanish words in between. Bjorn had worked as a cook in Uruguay for twenty years, and that was how they met each other. Paola's mother tongue is Spanish, and she acquired Chinese after she married. The conversation starts with Paola's comments on Bjorn's driving speed. This episode demonstrates another endearment term, together with code switching to attenuate face threatening and to signal deprecation (Norrick & Bubel, 2009). After addressing her husband by the endearment term *amour* (*love*) in her L1 Spanish, Paola makes the request of *drive more slowly*. The combination of code-switching and the endearment term serve the function of downgrading the threat to her husband. Paola's utterance prefaced with the vocative, also indicates her upcoming statement might be undesirable. In this sense, the speaker expects a high possibility of a strong response from the addressee. The interlocutor is observed to treat the previous turn as a challenge, given that his report of the actual speed is followed by a negative rhetorical question *still not slow enough?*. Bjorn's disagreement can be observed in line 480, where he defends himself by saying that he has driven slowly enough with a loud voice. The addressee perceives the prior turn as a criticism, even though the speaker may not intend to raise disagreement, but rather to express a concern. It corresponds nicely with Tannen's suggestion (2010) that both the wife's care for her husband and

the husband's complaint are valid and indirectly evidenced. Paola acknowledges her husband's affective stance, and compromises by using the agreement token 好啦 (*alright*) in a low pitch to calm him down. That is not to say that she completely accepts his statement. The wife eases her challenge and shows her willingness to acknowledge her husband's point of view. Then the disagreement can continue.

(3)

068 → A 都要先-這個都要先想好喔(.) <爸爸 ↑ ->你>不要以為<

069 那麼簡單(.)她->已.上次已經帶她<去interview

070 ㄟ了啊 ㄟ

071 H ㄌ現-在-ㄌ我阿母啊在那個-加拿大吶 (1.0)

072 A 你要她去加拿大?加拿大費用比較高啊

073 H 不是的- ㄟ她現在 ㄟ 她女兒不是生小孩嗎?

074 A ㄌ她還要先適應ㄌ

(Henry 37, Filipino& Ayi 37)

068 → A: 【all have to be first- all this needs to be thought well first (..)<PAPA ↑ -> Don't

069 >think< (it's) that easy (.) She-> last time (he) already took her <to interview

070 ㄟle (particle) ahㄟ

071 H: ㄌno-w- ㄌmy mother is in that-Canada (1.0)

072 A: You want her to go to Canada? (In) Canada fees are higher.

073 H No. - ㄟRight now she ㄟ Didn't her daughter give birth?

074 A ㄌShe still needs to adjust firstㄌ】

The conversation in excerpt (3) regarding the decision of sending their eldest daughter abroad for high school is taken from Henry and Ayi, a Filipino-Taiwanese couple living in Taiwan. Henry was born in the Philippines and moved to Taiwan at the age

of nineteen. Henry's father was an immigrant from Fujian province in China and his mother was half Spaniard, half Filipino. He went to Chinese complementary school to learn Chinese for ten years. It seems Henry's learning experiences in the Philippines put him in opposition to send his daughter there. He prefers to let their daughter stay with the family in Taiwan, whereas his wife would rather opt for the school in the Philippines. No consensus has been achieved in the previous five minute negotiation; thus Henry suggests not making any decision, since they have one more year for consideration. However, his wife disagrees and offers evidence of why the preparation and planning needs to be carried out in advance.

The vocative 爸爸 (*father*) occurs in the middle position of the utterance (line 68), and serves as a reminder of reciprocal intimate relationship as parents. It falls in the functional vocative category in Haverkate's model, and serves both referential and endearment functions (1983). The wife uses a strategy consisting of an appellation grounded in affection and obligation towards Henry. Most importantly, it indicates the negative perception of the following evaluation prefaced with *don't you think it's that simple*. The address term specifies their relationship and denotes an assertion (Haverkate, 1983). Ayi's proposition is supported by the epistemic stance, which refers to the interview their daughter has attended. On the other hand, Henry deploys a different strategy to change the focus of the topic, given that his mother will be in Canada and unavailable to take responsibility for the granddaughter. Both participants align themselves with regard to each other's stances based on their past experiences, and neither of them agrees on the education systems they grew up with. It is in line with what Damari (2010) proposes that the stancetaker might respond to prior stances in the ongoing relationship between the interlocutors. Notably, Henry successfully shifts the focus, but his ambiguous utterance results in Ayi's misunderstanding. The

wife perceives Canada as an alternative country for sending their daughter abroad. As a result, she disagrees again by opposing the higher expenditure.

(4)

- 294 Z: 你知道他晚上吃(.)多少東西嗎?吼，那個吃完
- 295 S: 嗯
- 296 Z: 又吃了一根香蕉
- 297 S: 嗯
- 298 Z: 然後我姐姐有煮飯，又有吃，然後剛才>又喝了牛奶<太「恐怖了」
- 299 S 「對啊」 =
- 300 =「奇怪」
- 301 Z 「問題」是都「不會長啊」
- 302 → S 「不用擔心啦」老婆，這個-<不用擔心啦>
- 303 Z 我真的很擔心「哪」
- 304 S 「妳」<不用>「擔心啦」
- 305 → Z 「老公↑」七個月了，長不到一公斤，  
哪有baby是這樣子的?(1.0)

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 294 Z: 【Do you know how much he has eaten (.) tonight? Ho, after eating that
- 295 S: hm
- 296 Z: (He) also ate a banana.
- 297 S: hm
- 298 Z: Later on my sister cooked, again he ate it. Then again (he) >had milk just now<  
(It's) 「terrifying」
- 299 S: 「right」 =
- 300 S: =「(It's) strange」



managing the disagreement is to downplay the seriousness of the weight issue. Meanwhile, he uses the vocative term to remind his wife that he is on her side, even though he disagrees with her. With the vocative, wife, Saied increases the solidarity of couplehood, and emphasises that they belong to the same group.

On the other hand, it is interesting to examine Zoe's use of the counterpart relationship appellation, husband, in her response. The turn-initial use of this address term can function as turn constructional pivot so that the speaker can "circumvent incipient transition and thereby secure further talk" (Clayman, 2012, p. 1866). In line 305, Zoe seizes the floor by addressing Saied as 老公 (*husband*), with a loud voice to display her dissatisfaction with his answer. The relationship appellation term serves a special purpose of expressing impatience, and as a floor holder simultaneously. It also signals the interlocutor that her response will be a strong disagreement. The participants' invocation of discourse identities are made relevant by the use of an identity category in an address term (Greatbatch & Dingwall, 1998). Zoe's utterance which directly contradicts Saied's evaluation without any agreement components, can be seen as signifying strong disagreement as mentioned in Section 2.4.2. She makes the point that a 7 month-old baby putting on less than one kilogram in weight is a problem, and challenges her husband to see if he could find any other case to support his stance. Zoe's strategy is to strengthen her claim and her disagreement becomes more intense as she challenges him with a wh-question based on common knowledge.

There are two parallel addressing terms in this episode: wife and husband and their functions are exactly the opposite of one another. Saied uses the relationship appellation 老婆 (*wife*) in the middle of the utterance to soften the discord and redefine the relationship, despite the occurrence of explicit discord. By repeating *no*



worries, wife, no worries about this, Saied emphasises his opinion of there being nothing wrong with their son. His vocative is to show affectionate feeling in hopes of calming Zoe down, and hence it also functions as an endearment term. The appellation terms are used to indexically link to how speakers identify themselves in relation to each other, and communicate emotive and interactional attitudes; in this case, it is husband and wife (Maynard, 2002). Saied downplays his opinion in a jocular way and suggests the baby has a good digestive system.

Extracts 5 to 7 have been selected to show how first names function in the multilingual couples' disagreement.

(5)

- 983 T <哇>妳看這個 ㄅ是- (.) ㄅ spicy pineapple
- 984 → M ㄅpineappleㄅ (1.0) I don't get it. Spicy
- 985 ㄅwhat did they mean?ㄅ =
- 986 T ㄅ他們怎麼會喜歡 ㄅ 對呀連甜點都 ㄅ是辣的ㄅ
- 987 → M = ㄅTony.Iㄅ 我認為它那個不是辣的(.)
- 988 >它的意思是.只是<它有放spice.就是它有放一:些香料
- 989 T mm. 它這spicy?(..)它還不辣?
- 990 M 就跟 (° H) 你講它<不是辣的嘛> (1.0) 它是-spicy指的是
- 991 它有-(tsk)就是. 它很有-那個:uh味道(1.0)它不是說它真的spicy.
- 992 倒是這個讓我覺得很奇怪

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

- 983 T: 【<Wow>, you look, this ㄅis- (.) ㄅ spicy pineapple
- 984 → M: ㄅpineappleㄅ (1.0) I don't get it. Spicy-
- 985 ㄅWhat did they mean?ㄅ =

986 T: ʌHow come they like- ʌ yeah, even the dessert is all ʌ spicy-ʌ  
 987 → M = ʌTony.I-ʌ I think that is not  
 988 spicy (. ) > It means. just means < it has spice. That is there is some spice in it.  
 989 T mm. (So) this spicy? (..) It is not spicy?  
 990 M (I) (° H) TOLD YOU it < is not spicy> (1.0) It is-spicy means  
 991 it has-(tsk) that's. It has a lot -that: uh, taste.(1.0) It doesn't mean it's really spicy,  
 992 but this one does make me wonder-】

In extract (5), the couple disagree with each other about the description of the flavour of a certain dessert, and the ambiguous adjective “spicy”. Tony is from Taiwan, and Maria is half Taiwanese, half Italian. Tony and Maria relocated to the UK for him to take up a PhD position three years ago. Maria is a full time employee, and English is the language she uses at work. Both Tony and Maria code-switch between Chinese and English in their conversations. Maria’s utterance *Tony, I- I don’t think that is spicy* preceded by addressing his first name signifies her intention of gaining the floor. She begins her utterance by addressing her husband’s first name “*Tony*” in English to capture his attention, and indicate that her stance will contradict what he states about the dessert being hot. Noticeably, her utterance begins with the English *I*. Although the use of first names can be interpreted as friendliness in some contexts (Rendle-Short, 2007), that is not the case in intimate relationships. On the contrary, Maria uses her husband’s first name to maximise the distance between her and her husband. It also contradicts what Tannen and Kakava (1992) propose, namely that disagreement is frequently accompanied by linguistic markers, such as first names, to express solidarity. The implication is achieved by means of several discord markers. First, Maria deploys the vocative together with code-switching (line 987) which signals her interlocutor about her oppositional stance. The use of first name also

serves the function of drawing her husband's attention. Tony acknowledges the signal and relinquishes the turn. Maria switches to Chinese and continues her clarification of the semantic ambiguity of the term spicy. Secondly, a negation token 不是 (*is not*) can be found in Maria's expression of disagreement.

It is interesting to note that Maria repairs her utterance "I" into Chinese 我認為 (*I think*), and switches to Chinese to emphasise her proposition. Maria rephrases the utterance by using an epistemic token 我認為 (*I think*) to elucidate the difference between spicy and hot. Her motivation for switching to Chinese might serve the purpose of facilitating the communication, whereas the CS reflects the different degrees of her epistemic stances, from uncertainty to certainty. There is a communication breakdown, given that the perceived ambiguity of the term "spicy" in English does not exist in Chinese. When Maria is contemplating the meaning of the word, she uses English for her epistemic stance-taking (line 987-990). It reveals her uncertainty and her reasoning process. Then she switches the language to Chinese, after she discovers that spicy means flavoured with spice, rather than indicating the sensation of burning. Chinese is the code she chooses for the conclusion and clarification in the rest of her turns, except for the word "spicy". Speaker's certainty also signals the addressee about the stance being unchallengeable (Kockelman, 2004). In this sense, CS highlights the epistemic strength of the stance. Tony seems not to receive the message as demonstrated by his bewildered response.

(6)

001 → B 寶拉, ↑(0.3)最近我們-(1.0)感情不是很好吶(0.5)常常會吵架耶(0.8)

002 啊? (1.2)不像以前>那樣我們吵吵架<就會..就會和好吶(0.7)

003 一連就好幾-好幾天就:不講話了(1.0)

004 P 我故意的啊.因為我吵不贏你啦(0.5) >跟你說我就不講話

005                    你就會<受不了啊.比我還de比我還:受不了啊!>所以我不講

006                    話這樣的話<.跟你處罰啊

007            B     是嗎?

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

001    →    B : BaoLa, ↑ (0.3) recently we-(1.0) (Our) feelings are not so good (0.5) (We) often have  
                 quarrels. (0.8)

002                    Ah? (1.2) Not like before > we had quarrel < and then would .. make up. (0.7)

003                    (Now we do) not talk to each other several-several days continuously (1.0)

004            P:    I did it on purpose. 'cause I can't win the quarrel (0.5) > (I) tell you (if) I stop talking

005                    you would not be able to < stand for it. worse than me de, than me: cannot stand for it >

006                    so I don't speak to punish you in a way.

007            B: Is that so?

This episode is selected to demonstrate a particular case of vocatives, which is related to translation. It might occur in intercultural multilingual conversations only. First names which are translated into a different language can also be used to draw attention and signal the interlocutor the upcoming disagreement. It is interesting to note that Taiwanese partners call their husbands' or wives' first names in Chinese phonetic translation. For instance, Paola is addressed as 寶拉, which refers to Paola phonetically in the excerpt above. The disagreement topic happens to be about their quarrelling. Bjorn raises the issue about their frequent quarrels and attempts to find out the reason why his wife reacts differently, compared to the way she used to be. Paola makes her stylised strategy clear by confessing to Bjorn her silence is a form of stimulus to manage their quarrel, since she is disadvantaged in the disagreement. This could be interpreted as a language barrier, since they communicate in Chinese. Paola uses the dramatisation of emotion through silence, making it difficult to interpret

because of the correspondence between the performance itself and her internal state (Saunders, 1985). It results in communication breakdown between the couple as Bjorn appears to be bewildered. The vocative, the wife's first name, is an attention getter and is also used to signal more serious discussion. During the 27 days of recording, Bjorn only calls his wife's first name once, and the rest of time he uses the second person pronoun 你 (you) to address her. First names represent formality and indicate the seriousness of the issue in this particular case.

(7)

- 488 → S    ɿGregoireɿ ,  
 489        G    ɿI'll ask theɿ people in the hospital what they think  
 490               it's the best.  
 491 → S    Gregoire, the size of the car is really limited  
 492        G    Yeah, ɿbut-ɿ  
 493        S       ɿA lotsɿ of luggage, right ↑ ? to take home

(Gregoire 31, French & Sophie 34)

The same holds for example (7). Sophie and Gregoire, a Taiwanese-French couple, are discussing the best way to take their new born twins home from the hospital. Gregoire is from France and he moved to the UK to study eight years ago. This couple use English as a lingua franca, given that English is the language they have spoken since they first met in college. Gregoire prefers to drive, but Sophie suggests taking a taxi instead. This episode is chosen for the purpose of using first names continuously in two turns. There is no doubt that Gregoire is the intended addressee. The occurrence of the vocative in dyadic interactions serves the function of holding the floor and attention taker (Clayman, 2012). The first name in line 488 occurs in

overlapping turns, which evidences its function of floor occupant and reinforces her ratified speaking turns (Lerner, 2003). However, Sophie did not win the floor. She addresses her husband by his name again at her second turn (line 491) and offers a cause to discourage Gregoire. By addressing her husband's first name, she implies that the upcoming utterance would be serious and more likely to be a disagreement.

Apart from the vocatives above, other means of projecting disagreement identified in the data may appear to be partial agreements or give such impressions.

#### **4.2.2     *Discourse Marker well***

English appears to be used by 15 out of 21 couples, either as a lingua franca, the main language choice, or one of the mixed languages (Section 3.4.1). It is not surprising to find that the English discourse marker (DM) *well* turns out to be one of the most frequent DMs in my recordings of multilingual couples' disagreement talk. *Well* centres on both previous and forthcoming utterances. Stenström (1994b) discusses objecting strategies and mentions that the use of *well* is immediately obvious when the interlocutors do not share opinions with each other. When an answer is introduced by *well*, it can function as an indirect way of saying no. Fung and Carter divide the cognitive functions of DMs into four classifications and *well* is considered as a marker of denoting thinking process and hesitation (2007). The functions can be overlapping during the interaction. In addition, it is important to clarify that in the case of *well*, it would mean that the DM function is unrelated to any of the adverbial or adjectival meanings (Norrick, 2001) despite the high occurrences of non-DM use.

Table 4-2 Number of occurrences of *well* in multilingual couples' disagreement

UK (10 couples)			TW (11 couples)		
Spouse		Taiwanese	Spouse		Taiwanese
*British1	5	0	*American	6	0
*British2	2	1	*British6	3	1
*British3	1	2	French	2	0
*British4	1	1	Japanese	0	1
Dutch	2	3	Russian	4	0
French	15	5			
*Irish	3	0			
Italian	7	0			
(N=48 in total)			(N=17 in total)		
Not found in South African and British5 couples' conversations			Not found in Filipino, Norwegian, Nigerian, Uruguayan, Pakistani, Canadian couples' conversations		

\*native English speakers

The table above shows the number of times *well* occurred in the recordings of multilingual couples' daily conversation. It is useful to note that with couples whose main language choices are not English, *well* is not found in their conversations (the Filipino, Norwegian, Nigerian, Uruguayan, Pakistani, Canadian spouses). The total occurrences of *well* found in the recordings are 78, including 13 adverbial usages. Generally speaking, native English speakers, such as British, Irish, and American participants do use *well* frequently, and more often than their Taiwanese wives although not significantly. When the language of communication is English, as

exemplified by British-Taiwanese couples in the UK, the occurrence of usage remains relatively low. A possible explanation can be found in Aijmer's review: the discourse functions of *well* are possibly less salient in authentic communication because of their more hedged or indirect nature (2011). The number of *well* occurring in the conversation of the French couple living in the UK ranks as the highest. The husband uses *well* a total of fifteen times, and the wife uses the DM five times in a one hour recording. There is no equivalent marker in either of their mother tongues. The marker facilitates the speaker to acknowledge the recipient's proposition. Meanwhile *well* also allows the interlocutor to introduce a different perspective to the previous statement. There is mutual understanding between conversers, who know what to expect and how to react accordingly. It is important to note that the pragmatic use of the marker is highly idiosyncratic. In excerpts 8 to 15, *well* is analysed with respect to its interactional and cognitive functions in the disagreements.

(8/1)

573 A 還是我可以給妳錢(.)可是如果之後說我缺錢妳「要」

574 C 「對」你可以先給我

575 一些錢。>因為我那個帳戶已經快要出包了<

576 A (°H)(SIGH) (1.0)唉 就是-之後就是妳-再,妳要-(1.0)

577 看清楚妳有多少錢 (3.0)

578 C 我當然會呀!可是你機票就三萬多塊了耶

579 → A Well-對!而且我-可是我之前就是給妳三萬多塊了(.)

580                   。對不對。？

581 C 那-我們去墾丁的錢呢? (1.0) Who paid for the- money?

582 → A Well-XiaoChin, that was(..) 妳沒有講清楚妳

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)



- 573 A: 【Or I can give you money(.) but if later I am short of money, you ㄈ have to ㄗ
- 574 C: ㄌ right ㄌ, you can
- 575 give me some first because that account of mine is soon going to be in trouble
- 576 A: ei, it's- afterwards it's you- again, you have to-
- 577 look more carefully how much you have. (3.0)
- 578 C: I definitely will, but just your flight ticket cost more than thirty thousand.
- 579 → A: Well- yes! And I- but I paid you back the thirty thousand earlier,
- 580 ◦ didn't I ◦ ?
- 581 C: Then- how about the money we spent in Kenting? (1.0) Who paid for the- money?
- 582 → A: Well-XiaoChin, that was (..) You didn't make it clear. ㄱ】

Extract (8) is taken from the conversation of the same American-Taiwanese couple, Ali and Chin, who have a disagreement about sharing the expenditure on a prior trip. In the earlier episode (1), the wife wanted to take some money from her husband's bank account to pay for her bill, but was rejected. The disagreement continues in this extract. The reason for selecting this episode is based on the fact that *well* itself is used for code switching, as the speaker's metalanguaging process about what to say next (Maschler, 1994b). In line 573, Ali introduces the concession offer of transferring a certain amount of money to Chin under the condition of mutual support. The offer is accepted immediately by the other interlocutor. His suggestion in lines 476-477 of managing her money more wisely is perceived as criticism. Chin opens her turn in a way that may be received as ostensible agreement "*I definitely will*", followed by a contrasting marker *but* to shift to a different focus to defend herself. She attributes her lack of money to the favour she did in paying for his flight ticket.

Ali's response prefaced with *well* 對 (*yes*) appears to a partial agreement token, yet

as one can see in the following utterance in line 579, the conversational move about to be taken in the upcoming discourse is an explanation. What he actually implies is that he has already returned the money, which opposes what his wife had said in the prior turn. The marker conveys the speaker's quasi-linguistic mental state as he is contemplating what is relevant to follow his viewpoint (Schourup, 2001). It also foregrounds old information to reinforce the speaker's statement, because *well* presupposes the previous context to the following utterance as a qualified answer and indicates the upcoming opposition (Cuence, 2008). The sentence's final tag question assuming Chin's knowledge of the payback gives the turn back to the interlocutor. Instead of responding with a direct answer, Chin shifts the focus to another expense concerning their trip by throwing out a rhetorical question *who paid for the money*. The second *well* is used for hesitation, where Ali refuses to answer the question directly in disagreement (Norrick, 2001; Aijmer, 2011). At line 582, Ali responds to the question with the DM which supports the argument that *well* can signal attitudinal function associated with softening (*ibid*). *Well* together with the vocative term *Xiao Chin* is used to correct an error the interlocutor made, which evidences the oppositional stance. Apparently, Ali perceives it rather as a reminder than a real request, given that he attempts to find a way to defend himself. Both of them employ the same strategy to avoid submission to each other.

The two following extracts provide examples of *well* as a response token that is used to signal their spouses regarding the desire to contribute their own opinions on the topics and indicates their contribution is undesirable.

(9)

134 W Hm, Leire (..) say(s) in France or in Belgium?

135        E    In France, the urban part of France

136        W    Hm unh

137        (6.0)

138        W    (YAWN)

139 →     E    Well, you can stop by in Brussels or -any other place.

140           Brussels you get lost in the city

141        W    Hm, I don't really want to go to <city> though, even Eindhoven,

142           I don't really -

143        E    Too big!

144        W    It's not too big, ok? Nothing is bigger than er, London, come on!

145        E    Uh, I mean, if: you want to have a quick stop-by

(Elko 47, Dutch & Winnie 52)

In excerpt (9), the Dutch husband, Elko and his Taiwanese wife, Winnie are discussing a place to take Winnie's son to travel this year during their afternoon walk. Elko met Winnie when they both worked for the same company in the Netherlands. This couple immigrated to UK due to their work thirteen years ago. Elko suggests a city as a place for transfer based on the knowledge that he knows his wife tends to get lost in big cities. Elko uses *well* to signal the potential disagreement, yet still provides an undesirable suggestion. Here, the DM functions to contribute an opinion (Muller, 2005) and marks the continuation with a contrast (Biber, *et al.*, 1999, p. 1087). His assumption is that his wife is not fond of big cities, which can be seen in line 140, where he mentions her being lost in Brussels before. English DM *well* is used in Elko's L2. It can be seen as what Schourup describes as a “*quasi-linguistic mental state*” (2001). Elko is actively considering what is relevant to the discussion, and decides to make a suggestion. Winnie does not deny the assumption that she has been

lost in big cities before, but she objects to the reason Elko proposes about why she dislikes big cities. For Winnie, it is the wrong interpretation. Her explanation is interrupted by Elko, who attributes the reason to the size of the city. Winnie's oppositional disagreement is not addressed to the specific size of the city. She immediately denies his comment by uttering a negative sentence with an interrogative token. As a challenge, the token is directed to the interlocutor's viewpoint. Winnie clarifies her proposition based on the fact that the city where they live and work is much bigger, and ends with an interjection to show her strong disagreement.

(10)

- 253        T    那(2.0)那我們自己要不要去Leeds玩呢?
- 254 →    M    Hm↑(..) well, I think so↓(1.0)
- 255        T    那就(YAWN)我們自己去Leeds啊(.)沒有不去她那邊-
- 256        M    Mm
- 257        T    下次碰到她就跟她講>喔我們去了Leeds但是
- 258                沒有去你那邊< hehehe (1.5) 這樣好嗎?
- 259        M    你一定要跟人家說我們去Leeds嗎?

(Maria 38, Italian & Tony 36)

- 253        T:    【Then, then are we going to Leeds by ourselves?
- 254 →    M:    Hm↑(..) well, I think so ↓(1.0)
- 255        T:    Then just (YAWN) we go to Leeds on our own. (.) not, without going to her place-
- 256        M:    Mm
- 257        T:    Next time when we see her, just tell her > oh we went to Leeds but
- 258                didn't go to visit you there < hehehe (1.5) Is this nice?
- 259        M:    Do you have to tell her that we go to Leeds?  】

The conversation between Maria and Tony, from which extract (10) is taken, offers an instance of non-native English speakers' usage of *well* in response to a yes/no question. The couple are planning their next trip after dinner, and Tony suggests visiting another Taiwanese friend who lives in the same city. There is a DM cluster with *hm*, *well*, and *I think* in Maria's reply at line 254. Cognitively, Maria's *well*-prefaced response signals to the interlocutor that she is determined to go despite her husband's preference for other places. When Maria uses the DM *well*, her positive utterance has been weakened, which shows she is aware that her husband might not agree with her. It mitigates the speakers' epistemic stance succeeded by *I think*, which is in line with Aijmer (2011). Maria does not consider yes or no as the right answer for her husband's question, and hence, she chooses *well* as an indirect response (Schriffrin, 1987). Tony supports his opposition to Maria in lines 257-258 by recalling the reason that it is generally considered impolite behaviour for Taiwanese people to travel to a city where friends live without paying them a visit. His utterance is perceived as a rhetorical interrogation, in which he describes an imaginary scene of embarrassment if they were to encounter the friend. Maria's opinion is based on the sense of privacy, and in her turn she questions Tony why it is necessary to mention their trip to the friend. Their negotiation remains inconclusive.

(11)

- 043 → H Ya^, well (.) I can >im<..What (do) you mean they  
 044 work <ha^rder> in NewYork? ʃyouʔ think?  
 045 T Lya-  
 046 I think they (are) all TOUGH! like working  
 047 harder and then (.) and then always (.) spend  
 048 all the money on the something ʃsureʔ

049           H                                    └I think it's┐  
 050                   just depends on-(..)here^ you are! and I'm  
 051                   at your work anyway. ┐in the┐  
 052           T                                   └Really?┐

(Howard 35, British & Tiffany 34)

The use of the token *well* in extract (11) illustrates the same principle of weakening the positiveness of the utterance. British-Taiwanese couple, Howard and Tiffany, are discussing whether people in New York work much harder than employees in London. Tiffany met Howard through work, and they have been a couple for six years. They communicate in English, and there was no code switching during the recording. Tiffany came to England to study seven years ago, and is now working as a designer. First, Tiffany mentions her personal experience, based on collaboration with colleagues in New York. Her implication of the discourse underlies there is difference between the working culture in these two places, which means the other team work harder according to Tiffany. The case is worth discussing here, given that the connection between *yes* and *well* forms a DM cluster. The combination indicates the speaker's doubt (Cuenca, 2008). The tokens *ya well* also serve the function of signalling his upcoming disagreement. In addition, *well* weakens the force of the ostensible alignment marker. As Furkó (2005) points out, the marker *well* was first used to correspond to the token *yes, but* which implies negative meaning, and hence it weakens the positiveness of the utterance when it is combined with affirmative DMs. At line 43, first Howard confirms what Tiffany has said with the affirmative marker *ya*, and then utters *well* to indicate his negative evaluation of the prior statement. Despite the incomplete sentence, one can expect Howard's expression is very likely to be something involving partial disagreement. *Well* can occur prefacing information

and introduce genuine epistemic questions (Schourup, 2001). Thus his question along the lines *you mean they work harder in New York? you think?* indicates his oppositional stance in a cluster of wh- and yes/no questions. Howard's proposition is based on the fact that Londoners also work very hard. In the portion of the disagreement that precedes line 52, Tiffany's position is that she considers the competition in New York to be higher. The overlapping turns in lines 51-52 reveal Tiffany's disagreement as evidenced by the rising contour in the question *Really*.

(12)

- 046        T    na- ɾ that:'s ɾ one thing about uh  
 047        H        ʌ=windy-ʌ  
 048        T    British people are moaning <everything  
 049                >even they got the gorgeous weather  
 050                suitable this summer and you still  
 051                complain (1.5) huh  
 052    →   H    Well, I'm just saying it could be better  
 053        T    okay

This excerpt (12) presents the divergent opinions about weather in London between Howard and Tiffany. It is selected to show the justification function of *well*. As inferred from her reaction in line 48, her perception of British people's attitude is negative. Howard disaligns with his partner's affective stance by uttering his response prefaced with *well* to introduce his clarification at line 52. When agreeing, explaining or justifying, the DM *well* oftentimes occurs in conjunction with hedging (Innes, 2010) and in this case, Howard uses *just* to soften his answer. The marker signals that his reaction will not necessarily be desirable for Tiffany. It also functions as a softener for

his disagreement along the line *I'm just saying it could be better*. By putting it in a more pragmatic way, the explanation is accepted as evidenced by the agreeing token *okay* at the end.

(13)

- 349 G on Thursday, I bring the baby ba^ck. (4.0)
- 350 S ya (H) (2.0)
- 351 G A- ʔndʔ -
- 352 → S ʔWellʔ , on FRIDAY(YAWN) you- b:ring the baby back
- 353 G It's >better if the day before <, not to be-
- 354 S ʔOkayʔ
- 355 G ʔTo makeʔ the journey easier. If I am a rush or
- 356 ʔsomeʔ thing to
- 357 S ʔOkayʔ .

(14)

- 726 G ʔMaybe yeah,ʔ but if this is inside, it's gonna be struggle=
- 727 → S ʔWell, actuallyʔ -
- 728 G =to open the door
- 729 S But just for the-, for the night (2.0)
- 730 G Or we can leave it-< in the corner> (2.0)
- 731 S Yeah
- 732 → G Well, >I am thinking of moving ʔ the bedsideʔ table<
- 733 S ʔYeah:ʔ (.)it might be a
- 734 good idea(.)

(Gregoire 31, French & Sophie 34)



Two examples taken from Gregoire and Sophie, which are illustrated in extracts 13 and 14, show highly habitual use of this discourse marker, as this couple's conversations represent the most frequently occurring usage of *well* in the data (See Table 4-2). In extract (14), the topic for the couple is to decide which day suits them better to bring their babies back home from the hospital, which is taken from the same episode as extract 7. Frequent overlapping and latching (lines 351-357) mixed with many short turns indicate the disagreement atmosphere. Sophie's turns seem to be in favour of alignment, given that she produces agreement tokens (*yeah, okay*) three times except the utterance prefaced by DM *well* at line 352. As Sifianou (2012) proposes, an agreement can be interpreted as tantamount to endorsing the speaker's self-belittling remarks. Personal traits and the couples' relational history may also contribute to such a strategy. It may explain why Sophie compromises immediately after Gregoire provides a good reason for changing the plan at the end. However, the utterance prefaced with *well* in the overlapping turns (line 352) appears to be Sophie's strong disagreement. The marker *well* introduces the speaker's opinion, where she is evaluating a previous statement. Gregoire prefers to take their daughters home one day earlier, and mentions the exact day in the beginning of the talk. The wife confirms the information at line 350, but then corrects herself later at line 352. *Well, Friday you bring the baby back* indicates she realises the lack of mutual understanding about the date, which she thought should be on Friday, rather than Thursday. She provokes a disagreement by raising her voice to emphasise the day, and also rejects her husband's epistemic stance. This episode demonstrates one of the few examples where *well* serves the function of heightening challenges (Innes, 2010).

In extract (14), both Gregoire and Sophie use the DM *well* in the discussion about the rearrangement of the master bedroom, because an extra bed will be added for their

twin daughters. The use of *well* occurred twice in this conversation, when both interlocutors were evaluating their own expressions. First Sophie's utterance starts an introductory phrase "*well, actually-*" where the token functions as an indicator for opposition, albeit her turn is interrupted by Gregoire. She attempts to justify her statement by using this DM. According to Schourup (1985), *well* can be used to indicate speakers are consulting their own thoughts and producing insufficient response (Schiffrin, 1987). The noticeable pause after *well, actually* goes hand in hand with the speaker's hesitation. Sophie loses the floor, deliberately or not, which allows her husband to deliver his statement. It can be seen as a means to avoid direct confrontation, as Sophie employs an indirect means of responding to Gregoire's proposition marked with *well* to downgrade her different stance. It also signals to her husband the upcoming disagreement in spite of a mitigated one. The second *well* uttered by Gregoire can be seen at line 731, where he shows his uncertainty about the suggestion, and again the marker signals to Sophie that his opinion might be the opposite. In addition, *well* serves as an editing marker for self-correction to repair and modify his expression. It contradicts the argument that when *well* occurs in repair sequences, it is strongly associated with challenges (Innes, 2010). In this context, Gregoire is adding information to his prior viewpoint rather than challenging his wife.

(15)

511 F 那邊有房子蓋在那裡真奇怪

512 → K Hm well, 它蓋的時候那邊應該是不錯啊

513 F Hm

514 K 後來就變那個..er擁擠的路啊

515 F 還..是也沒有別的房子啊(.) ㄟ就它一個(..)對不對? ㄟ

516 K LYeah I know, that's right-L

(Ken 40 British & Fanny 50)

The last example of DM *well* is chosen for its signal of violating the interlocutor's expectation in relation to code-switching. The conversation between Ken and Fanny, a British-Taiwanese couple living in the UK, is recorded at their dining table as seen in extract (16). They are recalling the house they considered purchasing in a certain area a few years ago, and discussing why they changed their mind. Fanny attributes the reason to the poor location of that property, and concludes it would be unusual to have a house there in the first place. At line 512, Ken's oppositional stance is *well*-prefaced. The discourse marker indicates the speaker's forthcoming comment is from a different perspective. *Well* can mitigate disagreement by making it less harsh, which is attributed to the DM's epistemic quality (Schourup, 2001). It is interesting to note that code-switching occurs after the marker *well*, when Ken is deliberating the reason why the house was built in that area. My interpretation is based on the fact that Ken is a native English speaker, and that he spontaneously uses his mother tongue when he is consulting with himself. It is the cognitive function of this DM to signal that the speaker needs time to contemplate (De Klerk, 2005). His following statement *hm, well, it ought to have been quite nice there at the time it was built* is from a different point of view; meanwhile, his use of modal verb *ought to* implies his uncertain assumption. Ken elaborates his opinion on the change in the area over time.

The token signals that there will be disagreement and mitigates it in advance. However, Fanny is not convinced by Ken's explanation, as she hesitates in the next turn, and then challenges him by pointing out there is no other house around. Ken shows his partial agreement with her to terminate the negotiation.

### 4.2.3 Apology

The third discourse strategy that can also project the oppositional stance occasionally in disagreement is apology. Apology serves the function of indicating the other interlocutor for the subsequent confrontation, as well as mitigating the impact. When one cannot comply with the interlocutor's request, he or she may mitigate the consequences through apology (Liao & Brenahan, 1996). The implicit meaning of apologetic utterance, such as "I'm sorry", can be manipulated by the semantic-pragmatic use in combination with the connective *but* (McEvoy, 1995). Multilingual couples use apology in disagreement as a strategy to negotiate different opinions. It is interesting to note that all the apologies found in the data were employed by three Taiwanese wives, as exemplified by excerpts 16 to 18.

(16)

32 K oh-再看他就-國中畢業可以當兵就先當兵就賺一年「他就」

33      → T                                  「很抱歉」他

34 已-那個兵:制已經廢掉了(1.0)

35 K 他決定了嗎？

36 T hm(1.0)

37 K 那:「怎麼」

38 T 「他已」經不用當兵了

39 K 那-怎麼怎麼.他::那個-對幹大陸啊?(2.0)跟那個怎  
 40 麼對抗 ㄟ 啊 ㄟ ?

41 T ㄌ募ㄌ 兵制

42 K 募兵-(3.0)(SIGH)(°H)

43 T 他可以念軍校啦

(Kimura 45 , Japanese& Tina 41)

32 K: 【oh- (We'll) see when he- graduates from junior high school, he could serve in the  
 military to have one more year. ㄟ He will ㄟ

33 → T: ㄌ I'm very sorry. ㄌ He

34 already-the military conscription has been abandoned

35 K: Has he decided?

36 T: hm (1.0)

37 K: Then:: ㄟ how ㄟ

38 T: ㄌ He'll ㄌ no longer have to serve in the military.

39 K: Then- how-how, he::that-fight against mainland? (2.0) How can (you) fight against

40 that ㄟ ah ㄟ ?

41 T: ㄌprofㄌ essional system

42 K: professional -(3.0) (SIGH) (°H)

43 T: He can study at the military academy. ㄱ

In extract (16), Japanese-Taiwanese couple, Kimura and Tina, living in Taiwan, are discussing the best arrangement possible for their son's future. They have one son and a daughter and attempt to raise them bilingually in Chinese and Japanese. The conversations were recorded in the evening while their children were having their private piano lessons. Kimura proposes that their son could join the army based on the son's physical education performance in order to make additional time to determine

his interests. Tina's response prefaced by 很抱歉 (*I'm very sorry*) at line 33 indicates her discouraging utterance. The fact that Tina apologises for contradicting her husband can be interpreted as an indirect way of rejecting his proposal and a means of mitigating her disagreement. Apart from that, the apology term overlapping with Kimura's turn indicates that Tina attempts to hold the floor. Arguably, it is possible that the speaker offers an apology without feeling responsible for the offense (Coulmas, 1981). Tina's utterance is to contest her husband's mistake, given that the circumstances have been changed. Instead of criticising her husband for not being practical, Tina introduces an objective fact to uphold her position. Her counterclaim is supported by the new policy for military service in Taiwan, from conscription to professional system, which Kimura is unaware of. Tina does not experience being humiliated by saying 很抱歉 (*I'm very sorry*), but "does feel the need to satisfy the social expectation of expressing regret without taking responsibility" (Kim, 2008, p. 262). Culturally speaking, Japanese and Taiwanese participants are found to use the expression of apology more frequently during refusal, with higher status interlocutors in particular (Liao & Bresnahan, 1996; Al-Kahtani, 2005). However, that is not to say the husband attains a higher status than the wife. Tina's apology term can be seen as an overt predictor for disagreement. The use of *I'm sorry* in couples' disagreement could then simply be taken as a strategic concern, in virtue of applying the principle of apology to defend their stance in their intimate relationship.

Excerpts 17 and 18 demonstrate the use of apology in their L2 English. "*I'm sorry but*" can be used to deny that there was ever anything wrong with the facts one was reproached with (McEvoy, 1995). In extract 17, Maria's utterance at line 118 prefaced by apology serves the function of signalling the interlocutor her disagreement in the discussion of family disease with her husband. The opposition comes after the

connective marker *but*, preceded by *I'm sorry*. Her utterance can be interpreted as “I am sorry to point it out to you, but I must say it is not better”. The utterance following the connective *but* appears to be such a strong contradiction that it needs to be softened by apology, and clearly gives the other interlocutor a cue for the opposition. It is possible that a speaker does not have the sincere feelings of regret and apologising, but rather a strategic performance or a token of acknowledging minor infractions (Terkourafi, 2011). Her presupposition of using *I'm sorry but* is to draw the conclusion *it's not better*. On the other hand, Maria seizes the turn by interrupting Tony's articulation. Thus, one can also take the apology as a turn holder.

(17)

- 113 M Mm uh
- 114 T 心臟病(° H)
- 115 M Hm huh
- 116 T/ M @@@
- 117 T 然後再攝護 ㄣ#ㄣ
- 118 → M ㄣI'mㄣ sorry but it's not better
- 119 T 可是這些都是>一些<比較慢性的啊
- 120 M ㄣbut still↑ㄣ
- 121 T ㄣ而且都-ㄣ 都不是絕症啊
- 122 M Mmhm

(Maria 38, Italian & Tony 36)

- 113 M: 【Mm uh
- 114 T: heart disease (° H)
- 115 M: Hm huh
- 116 T/ M: @@@

- 117 T: Then again prostate ɹ # ɹ
- 118 → M: ɹ I'm ɹ sorry but it's not better
- 119 T: but these are all > some < relatively non-acute
- 120 M: ɹbut still↑ɹ
- 121 T: ɹand all- ɹ are not incurable
- 122 M: Mmhm】

Another similar example can be found in excerpt (18) where the apology appears after *but*. Andy is originally from South Africa, where he met his Taiwanese wife, Pisces. This couple have a six year old son and twin daughters aged two. Andy and Pisces have known each other since high school, and they moved to the UK ten years ago due to Andy's job arrangement. They are discussing why the main ingredient for rice dumplings- duck eggs, seems not to be easily accessible at the market. By offering a reason which is different from Andy's opinion, Pisces apologises in the middle of her utterance at line 549. Her strategy is to signal her husband what she is going to articulate might be opposite to his statement. She raises the volume and changes the speed to emphasise her explanation. *I'm sorry* is to invoke the circumstance that there is a justification *they have to look after the ducks*. It parallels the meaning of *I'm sorry but* which refers to assessment undertaken in relation to evaluating defence, argument, or conclusion in McEvoy's categories (1995). However, her apologetic strategy has little effect on Andy because he replies in a more aggressive manner by throwing out a rhetorical question. It is ambiguous whether the speaker is actually looking for a reason or simply posing a rhetorical question (Egbert & Voge, 2008).

(18)

- 546 P Are you gonna pay 5 quid for one Zongzi then?



【rice dumpling】

- 547        A    Ah uh ( ° H) there< is no way(.) that>-just ONE  
548                duck egg is gonna cost you a quid  
549    →    P    uh but- I'm SOrry(.) <they↑ HAVE to look  
550                after the DUCKs>  
551        A    WHO has to >look after the< ducks?>YOU can find  
552                the supplier(3.0) ok?↓  
553        P    Duck is never cheap anyway

(Andy 38, South African & Pisces 38)

#### 4.2.4 *Complaint*

When disagreeing, multilingual couples frequently speak out about their complaints against each other. Complaints can be achieved through different turn shapes, such as questionings and assessments (Schegloff, 2005) and appear to be an essential element of disagreement (Laforest, 2002). A few examples are chosen below to demonstrate how complaining or blaming the other co-participants begins a disagreement when one party claims that their spouse has done something wrong or their actions, attitudes, perspectives or behaviours are considered undesirable. The nature of explicitness of the different types of complainable matters will be best illustrated by direct examination of the disagreement talk in excerpts 19 to 22.

(19)

- 237        B    妳不會吃醋?不會吃醋就有問題了，不會吃醋! (.)  
238                不會吃醋的那一天就是妳不喜歡我了，因為妳根本  
239                沒感覺了，(4.0)對不對?(1.0)那像妳:每次去

240 WTO(1.0) Ewa家>我怎麼知道妳們在幹嘛<?

241 P 哦不是光Ewa好幾個喔

242 → B 啊好幾個一樣啊！那我也看不到啊，嘴巴妳在講的

243 啊，誰知道？

244 P ( ° H)

245 B 妳啊妳去早一點回來就不會了啊

246 P 有啊，我上個禮拜我很早回來啊，你不是說(1.0)

247 B 上個@禮拜？

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

237 B: 【You won't be jealous? There is something wrong if you are not jealous. Not jealous(.)

238 The day you are not jealous will be the day you don't like me anymore, because you

239 lose your feelings for me (4.0) Isn't it?(1.0) Then like every time you: go to

240 WTO(1.0) Ewa's house> How would I know what you are doing <?

241 P: Oh not just Ewa, there are several others

242 → B: Ah several others are the same! Then I cannot see it. It's the words from your

243 mouth. Who knows?

244 P: ( ° H)

245 B: You ah, you go and come back home earlier, I won't (be upset).

246 P: I did. I came back early last week. Didn't you say (1.0)

247 B: Last @week? 】

Extracts 19 and 20 provide overt complaints from Bjorn where Paola is accused of coming home late. In the episode above, Bjorn begins the discussion with questioning Paola about attending gatherings with other immigrant women too often and spending too little time with him. Paola's response can be seen as partial agreement with her admitting that she went to Ewa's house, but she adds more information about the

gathering and clarifies that Ewa is not the only person she saw. The disagreement exchanges occur from line 242 when Bjorn appears to lose his temper by uttering the complaint *...several others are the same! Then I cannot see it. It's the words from your mouth. Who knows?* His response towards Paola's clarification is an overt unsatisfactory statement to make her utterance irrelevant. Irrelevancy claim is considered the most aggressive type of disagreement (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). Paola breathes in deeply and keeps silent in her turn. Silence is a sign that can be associated with negative valuation or positive views (Tannen, 1985). Bjorn's next conditional sentence, indicating his affective stance of being upset by her behaviour, can be seen as compromise. Paola's silence makes him realise his disagreement might be too aggressive, and he makes a concession offer to soften his previous complaint. Paola responds *I have*, an affirmative marker, used to contradict her husband's implication that "you did not come back early". She defends herself by offering evidence that she did come home early last week. Her disagreement is a counterclaim against Bjorn's statement that "I will not be upset if you come back early". What the wife implicitly claims is that his attitude remains the same even when she comes home early. Bjorn's response *last week?* in a raising intonation, together with a laugh, shows that he is not convinced. When complainers consider the response of the complainees inadequate, he or she may choose to ridicule the defence (Dersley & Wootton, 2010). Their oppositional stances are maintained.

(20)

064        B    那妳可以去..可以給我一個解釋嗎?

065                (3.5)

066        P    就是我想要..憋幾天不要跟你說話而已啦

067                也沒有什麼變啊(..)是不想講話而已啦(1.5)

068 → (SIGH) 這樣你還不懂?

069 B 那不想講話我們就沒有話可以講啦..不想講

070 話.那就是一點感情也沒有啦(1.0)那感情就

071 薄啦!(..) 那現在要..整天就會打麻將.

072 打麻將一打. 誰不生氣?(1.5)

073 也..一打一天一夜誰不生氣?(..)

074 那自己>也不知道自己在做什麼< (1.0)

075 P 那時間過得很快啦.我>都沒有在看時間了< 嘛 (2.0)

076 B 這種是理由喔?@(1.0)是嗎?@我搞不清楚

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

064 B: 【Then can you try to..can you give me an explanation?

065 (3.5)

066 P: It's that I want to..hold back for several days, not talking to you. That's all.

067 It doesn't mean I've changed (..) It's just (I) don't feel like talking. (1.5)

068 (SIGH) You don't understand after all this?

069 B: So (you) don't feel like talking, then we don't have anything to say..Don't feel like

070 talking. That means there is no feelings for me at all. (1.0) Then the feelings (for me)

071 is weak!(..) So now (you) want to..all day just want to play Majiang,

072 → play Majiang and once you begin. How can anyone not get upset? (1.5)

073 also..once begin, play one day and one night, how can anyone not get upset? (..)

074 Then you> are also not aware of what you're doing yourself < (1.0)

075 P: That time passes very quickly. I > didn't look at the time. < (2.0)

076 B: Can this be an excuse? @(1.0) Is it? @ I don't understand. 】

Another type of complaint, questioning, can be seen in extract (20). The topic of this episode is about the wife's refusal to talk after their dispute. Bjorn is looking for a

reasonable explanation from his wife. Paola collaborates with him and provides her account for all the refusals to talk is a strategy to have some peace. She counterclaims his assumption that her feelings for him have changed, and complains about his misinterpretation. At line 68, her complaint *You don't understand after all this?* is prefaced with an audible exhalation to express her helplessness. Bjorn's response concludes that no talking indicates the end of their relationship, and then he changes the focus to another issue he is upset about. He challenges Paola with the same rhetorical question twice, which can be seen as an aggressive type of disagreement (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). His assumption is based on the fact that anyone would be upset about his or her partner's gambling all day. In return, Paola offers the explanation that she loses track of time when she plays Majiang. This is a partial agreement. Paola attempts to explain that it is not her intention to stay up late, which is not accepted by her husband, as Bjorn's next turn is prefaced by a yes/no question to challenge her. It evidences that complainers tend to directly question the complainees' willingness to face up to it, when the disagreement increases the impact of complaint (Laforest, 2002). Paola's excuse of losing track of time is rejected. Bjorn's assessment of her behaviour remains negative as a hint of disapproval.

(21)

035        Z    <我知道>你有想要解決問題

036                (4.0)

037        S    我再答一次(.)##

038        Z    對呀(.)問題是↑-沒有解決了↑(.)小孩以後你自己看

039                著辦!因為我(CHOKE)人會-在哪裡我不知道

040        S    好啦!不要這樣說啦!我-

041 →        Z    啊真的就是這樣子,啊 (..)我,今天被你害到-這個地步

042           S                           L不能這樣J

043           Z   我也認了(CHOKE)

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

035           Z    【<I know> you wanted to solve the problem.

036                   (4.0)

037           S    I will answer (you) one more time(.)##

038           Z: Right, (.) (if) the problem is ↑ not solved ↑ (.) You'll have to think about how to take

039               care of the kids, because I (CHOKE) don't know where I will be.

040           S: Come on! Don't speak like that! I-

041 →       Z: AH EXACTLY IT'S THIS  ┐  AH (..) today I  ┐ was sabotaged by you- to this extent

042           S:                           (you) Lcannot do this!  J

043           Z:    I give up (CHOKE)  】

In the extract discussed in (21), Zoe's utterance is an overt complaint about being trapped, as she raises her voice to emphasise her claim that Saied is the one to be blamed. Zoe was a housewife and Saied was working part time for different kinds of jobs. At the time they participated in the project, the couple were preparing to move to a new place. Their disagreement topics were mainly about their financial problems and the moving. This example is selected to demonstrate complainers being the victim of unfair situations. Zoe uses strong accusation wording *being sabotaged by you to this extent* in a louder voice to upgrade the seriousness and strength of her complaint. It parallels the "adverse criticism of the hearer" pattern of complaint, which typically occurs in a form of negative evaluation, such as you disappointed me (Laforest, 2002). Noticeably, there is an overlap between lines 41 and 42, which evidences the oppositional move. Saied attempts to gain the floor by uttering *cannot do this* but in vain. Zoe holds the floor and expresses her stance successfully. The husband is

blamed for not being able to solve their financial problems. His response to Zoe's complaint constitutes a form of adverse assessment, which reveals a typical complaint-response realisation pattern, rejection. Along with the complaint, Zoe's emotional status dramatically changes as she shows her difficulty breathing. As the discussion intensifies, Saied admits to his fault and his response displays another pattern, acceptance of the complaint in his later turns.

(22)

064 → H Hey! You carnivore! Stop eating all the meat!

065 (1.0)

066 R I LIKE meat, OKAY?(3.0)and I AM not EATING ALL the

067 meat, YOU HAVE a LOT OF meat, too.

068 H Just a few.

069 R That's why I say once. <One piece in one time>, you

070 know why? because you can enjoy the most when it's soft

071 and fresh (1.0) Do I sound like a I'm-doctor lecturer?

072 H You sound like a-sort of the-hot pot councilor.

(Hamish 28, Irish & Ruby 25)

The last example of complaint is also “adverse criticism of the hearer” type, but in a non-serious way. This episode also demonstrates the use of humour in Hamish and Ruby's conversation, where the young Irish-Taiwanese couple are having Chinese hotpot for dinner as exemplified in extract (22). Hamish was about to finish his PhD and had been in the UK for over four years, and it was Ruby's second year in the country. Hamish begins his complaint about Ruby having eaten too much meat, prefaced with the noun *carnivore*, and the exaggerative description is followed by an

imperative sentence *Stop eating all the meat* at line 64. Ruby refuses to admit the charge and defends herself in a loud voice in the next turn. Her response is a partial acceptance, followed by denial and counterclaim of her partner's statement. It corresponds to the most common initial reply, "not at fault" denials to complaints, given that Ruby implicitly acknowledges some truth in the original complaint, but "overwhelmingly rejects any culpability for the action in question" (Derseley & Wootton, 2010, p. 388). The wife raises her voice and asserts that she is not the only person who is eating the meat. The statement attempts to turn the table on Hamish by saying *You have a lot of meat, too*. Ruby switches the focus to Hamish in order to justify the equality. In his complaint, Hamish centres on the amount of meat Ruby ate, and in her response conveying a contrasting version of the amount he ate is attributed to him. The husband partially agrees with her by uttering *just a few*, which is "didn't do it" denial type. His response is still a disagreement, given that he disagrees with the amount he has eaten. Ruby proposes an eating rule for hotpot as a solution. This episode terminates because of topic shift as shown in Ruby's second turn, where she teases herself based on her previous comment. Self-teasing jokes can function as a means of presenting positive self images (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997). Hamish disagrees and teases her with *you sound like a hotpot councilor*.

I have shown four different strategies, namely complaint, apology, DM *well*, and vocatives that multilingual couples employ to initiate oppositional stances in the section above. Once a dissent-turn sequence has been established, the expression of disagreement is expected. Multilingual couples display high engagement towards oppositional stances. In the next section, I will discuss the strategies that fall in the continuum of disagreement, and how oppositional stances are sustained.



### 4.3 Maintaining Disagreement

One explanation for engaging in disagreement is that couples focus on true respect, rather than being considerate to maintain their sincere and natural communication. It is worth noting that most of the discord episodes in the data are found to be mitigated. This section will follow Kakava's (2002) dimension of continuum of responses to an assessment ranging from agreement to disagreement, and group the disagreement strategies into mitigated, and aggravated types. The discourse strategies employed by the multilingual couples in the negotiation disagreement including questioning, swearing, reference to nationality are the aggravated types; and the mitigated types include: reference to nationality, humour, vocatives and indirectness. The categories are fluid and strategies are used dynamically during the interaction.

#### 4.3.1 *Questioning as Aggravated Disagreement strategy*

Questions can be used to challenge the other's position, assessment, or previous claim as a specific type of disagreement (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998; Heinemann, 2008), which Watts termed an instrumental device in gaining or losing self-image in conversation (1992). Interrogatives, including yes–no questions, wh-questions, declarative questions, tag questions, and alternative questions, can be used to implement hostile assertions of opinions, rather than questions to be answered (Heritage, 2002). Questioning is one of the devices which multilingual couples use to manage their disagreement talk, both in the opening and in the middle of conversation. As Georgakopoulou suggests, it is an indirect strategy to enable the speaker to develop his/her opposition further, and drive the interlocutor to logical inconsequentialities (2001). In what follows, episodes 23 to 28 will be used to demonstrate how

questioning can function as strong challenge in the disagreement.

(23)

87 → H How about this stinky tofu you like?

88 → R (°H) @@ what? (1.0) what's wrong with stinky tofu?

89 You eat cheese(..) it's the <sa↑me way> of making cheese

90 in stinky tofu. (1.0)

91 H The SMELL is >completely< different

(Hamish 28, Irish & Ruby 25)

In excerpt (23), Ruby mentioned that the reason she dislikes pork is due to the unpleasant smell. Wh-questions, including *how*, can be used as challenge because they occur in an environment of established complaint, accusation, disagreement and the like (Koshik, 2003). The disagreement starts with Hamish's challenge *How about the stinky tofu you like*, where he compares the pork to another tofu dish which is famous for having a strong smell. His stand point is based on the assumption that she dislikes dishes with unpleasant smell. Ruby's response at line 88, prefaced by a rhetorical interrogation, indicates her strong disagreement, which conveys the message that there is nothing wrong with the tofu dish. The first *what* is an exclamation mark to show her affective stance about the unexpected comment. In such a response, the questioner is clearly taking a negative stance. Her wh-question serves the function of challenging, rather than asking for information. In the following utterance, she defends herself by switching the focus to cheese that her partner likes and argues that the process of making cheese and tofu is very similar. She does not deny that the dish is smelly, but shifts the emphasis to the flavour. Through the comparison, Ruby rejects the preceding question as irrelevant, and invites the

interlocutor to acknowledge the fact that strong-smelling food can be tasty. The reply in questioning allows the other to express the opposite opinion, so Hamish contradicts her claim and argues the smell of cheese is completely different, showing he is not convinced by the explanation. Extract 23 provides a clear example of questioning in aggravated disagreement, where Hamish first uses a question as a challenge to Ruby's proposition, which in return is contradicted by Ruby's rhetorical question.

The strategic use of questioning enables him to reject the preceding turn as "irrelevant to the topic", and hence the speaker can keep his or her opposition (Gruber, 2001).

(24)

- 398 M 我想說>我昨天好像弄得<太酸了
- 399 T 不會呀
- 400 M Right
- 401 → T 昨天是有點-太辣了是不?
- 402 M 哪(。H)會辣?拜託(..)那是中午的,你>老是記不清楚<
- 403 T (0.5)中午不要吃太辣(1.0)。對身體不好。(1.0)
- 404 → M >我哪有弄太辣<?我弄<一點>點辣,你一直叫辣,>我不知道
- 405 為什麼<
- 406 T >我<?↑沒有啊!我是說<中午>,以中午來說的話(..)

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

- 398 M: I was thinking> yesterday I seemed to make it< too sour
- 399 T: Not at all.
- 400 M: Right
- 401 → T: Yesterday it was a bit-too spicy, wasn't it?
- 402 M: How (。H) could it be spicy? Come on. (..) That was lunch. You're > always unable

to remember things clearly. <

403 T: (0.5) Don't eat too spicy food for lunch. (1.0) ◦ Not good for (our) body ◦ (1.0)

404 → M: >When did I make it too spicy? <I made it <a little> bit spicy, and you keep on

405 grumbling it's spicy. I don't know why.

406 T: > I ?<↑No! I mean< lunch>, in terms of lunch (.)

The episode above demonstrates a striking example of a cluster of questioning in disagreement. The conversation was recorded when the couple were having dinner. Maria initiates the discussion about whether she made the dish too sour the other day in extract (24). Tony's direct response "not at all" is a negation against Maria's own criticism. His nonalignment with Maria's proposition is expected by the interlocutor as Maria utters an agreement token in the following turn. Then the actual disagreement occurs, where he adds a different comment by uttering a tag question at line 401. His question is conductive, given that it conveys the speaker's predisposition to a particular answer, based on the information provided in the prior turn (Quirk, *et al.*, 1985). Tony attempts to soften the disagreement as the objection is formulated less directly in the form of questions (Locher, 2004). However, the tag question is perceived as criticism by Maria. Her denial *How could it be spicy* serves to challenge her husband's stance (line 402). This question is received as a challenge because it conveys a strong epistemic stance and occurs in an already-established environment of disagreement (Koshik, 2003). In order to defend herself, Maria clarifies the spicy dish was for lunch, not dinner as a counter-accusation. First, she implies the dish was not spicy, and secondly turns the table on Tony for his poor memory. Her strategy is not successful, as Tony accepts the accusation, and shifts the focus to the issue of healthy eating for lunch to continue his stance. Here the disagreement between the couple becomes intense. Maria utters another wh-question as a denial in line 404.

Conversely, the epistemic stance conveys the message “I have never made it too spicy”. Her following utterances in a higher speed can be seen a sign of aggravated disagreement. The misunderstanding is sustained as Tony responds with a negation marker *No*, and retains his proposition about lunch.

(25)

526 → A What's wrong with them having a couple of

527 ducks? (1.0)## make other decision?

528 P I DON'T think- ha:having couple of ducks

529 we can produce(.)like hm uh 200 eggs(.)

530 @@ in a hurry

531 A You don't stick a whole egg in there (3.0)

(Andy 38, South African & Pisces 38)

Extracts 25 to 26 are examples of rhetorical questions as challenge. In excerpt (25), Andy's initial turn *what's wrong with them having a couple of ducks?* does not expect a direct answer, but indicates the speaker expects the reply to be negative. The questioner invites an answer of opposite polarity from a strong knowledge base which has an affirmative assumption (Koshik, 2003). Andy claims that having ducks can assure the production of duck eggs. Despite the inaudible sound, his following utterance appears to be another interrogation, which strengthens his challenge together with the first wh-element. The other interlocutor's turn prefaced with *I don't think* indicates Pisces disagrees with her husband on the issue. Her proposition is based on the quantity gap between ducks and the eggs they can produce. Following her point of view, Andy counterclaims that a rice dumpling does not require a whole egg, so a small number should be adequate. They retain the oppositional stances.

(26)

- 52 → B 我-妳有沒有問題呀?
- 53 P 好像是「西瓜」
- 54 → B 「有那」有那種perfume嗎?
- 55 P 是「那個啦」
- 56 → B 「妳有沒」有問題啊? por好不好?
- 57 P uh(1.5)
- 58 B 妳也幫幫忙

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 52 → B: 【I-is there something wrong with you ?
- 53 P: could be 「watermelon」
- 54 → B: 「Is there 」 does that kind of perfume exist?
- 55 P: (it) is 「that」
- 56 → B: 「Is there」 something wrong with you? Please, okay?
- 57 P: uh (1.5)
- 58 B Give me a break. 】【

In extract (26), it can be found that the environment of an already established disagreement context is similar for yes-no questions. This episode has been chosen because the questions occur with code switching to highlight the challenge. Bjorn's initial turn concerning what kind of perfume Paola purchased is a yes-no prefaced rhetorical question. The interrogation is used to perform as challenge. It conveys the speaker's epistemic stance, a negative assertion, rather than being an information seeking question (Koshik, 2003). At line 54, Bjorn's utterance *do they have that kind of perfume* is designed to prefer a "no" answer from his wife, and it also serves the function of disagreement. His epistemic stance is based on the knowledge that there is

no watermelon perfume. The yes-no question *is there something wrong with you* occurring twice in this episode signifies the questioner's assertion that he does not believe her claim and also ridicules it. It is similar to Gruber's "distorting opposing questions" which provides a powerful opportunity for speakers to challenge the interlocutor with unfavourable interpretation of their opinions (2001). The CS, Spanish *por* (please), occurs in conjunction with the second occurrence of the rhetorical question, which also displays the change of stances, from an epistemic stance to an affective stance. Such contrast adds a layer to highlight the opposition, given that CS and repetition can flag the speaker's disagreement (William, 2005). The fact that Bjorn utters three questions in his turns consecutively can be interpreted as an aggravated strategy for strong disagreement. Consequently, the recipient treats these questions as challenging, and either provides non-answer responses or refrains from responding at all (Heinemann, 2008). As one can see in this episode, Paola is attempting to work out the correct name for the scent in her L2 Chinese, instead of replying to the rhetorical questions posed by her husband.

(27)

782 G 你都沒有去日本玩過(.)上次>你說到日本去玩()

783 在台灣的時候-到日本去<玩!你就不要去

784 K 日本在哪裡?

785 S 沒機會啊

786 K 我要去日本

787 S 跑到美國，你跑到美國去啊

788 K 美國

789 S 我還在這邊賺錢呢，你↑

790 K 美國好玩嗎?

791 → S 你亂用我的錢到美國去,我怎麼去日本呢,是不是?

792 G Uhu-uhuh你在說什麼?誰賺誰的錢?@@@

793 誰賺誰的錢?huh? @@@ ( ° H)你有沒有說錯?huh?

794 S 大概吧!

795 → G 老公你-你:在說什麼?

796 S hm @@@

(Steven 48, British & Gina 47)

782 G 【You haven't been to Japan(.) last time>you mentioned going to Japan(.)

783 when we were in Taiwan-going to Japan<! You didn't want to go.

784 K Where is Japan?

785 S (I ) didn't have a chance.

786 K I want to go to Japan.

787 S To the States, you ran to the United States.

788 K United States

789 S I was still making money here, you↑

790 K Was it fun in the States?

791 → S: You messed my money up by going to the U.S.A., how could I go to Japan? Could I?

792 G: Uhu-uhuh What are you talking about? Who earned whose money? @@@

793 Who earned whose money? huh? @@@ ( ° H) Haven't you got it wrong? huh?

794 S: Perhaps

795 → G: Husband, you-you: what are you talking about?

796 S: hm @@@ 】

This example is taken from a British-Taiwanese couple, Steven and Gina's conversations at the dining table. Steven and Gina were at their late 40's, with two children. They had been living in Taiwan for nine years, before they moved to the UK.



Therefore, both of them are fluent in Chinese and English. They have been together for nearly two decades, and tend to tease each other often in their disagreements. It is interesting to note that their son tried to join the conversation, but his questions were all ignored by his parents. The episode is selected for the purpose of showing distorting opposing questions, and how the relationship appellation type of vocatives functions as a softener in the disagreement. The disagreement topic of excerpt (27) is about who the breadwinner is to support their family trip. It begins with Gina's earlier utterance making fun of Steven, because he has not been to Japan, and the position is based on Steven's rejection of her proposal for a combined trip to Taiwan and Japan. His defence is that the money was used up for Gina's other trip to America so he could not afford the trip to Japan. The relationship appellation term 老公 (*husband*) occurs right before Gina's second time of questioning (line 795). The vocative can be used to reinforce the involvement of disagreement, and to counteract the effect of strong disagreement as a softener (Tannen & Kakava, 1992). In this episode, the wife employs an indirect strategy to defend herself. Her way of showing disagreement is through interrogation as a request for his explanation. On the other hand, the husband's answers occur in a round-about way. Steven uses *perhaps* twice (line 794, 798), and attempts to blame her for not getting the correct message at the end. He refuses to admit being wrong, yet his strategy is also a mitigated one.

Steven's turn with a tag question *how could I go to Japan* constitutes a display of complaint, and also supports his previous claim of where the money was spent. The question is used to deny the previous claim concerning the reason he has never been to Japan and also functions as a challenge. His argument builds on the fact that the money had been spent on Gina's trip to the United States. Such an assumption results in her strong reaction in the next turn. Gina repeats her prior turn *Who earned whose*

*money*, and utters four questions along lines 792 and 793 to express her strong emotion about Steven's claim, including three wh-questions, and one yes-no question. The three successive wh-questions serve the function of "confession teaser", which establishes a strong obligation for the interlocutor to reply in a manner other than maintaining his or her opposition (Gruber, 2001). Gina's repetition of questioning is aimed at leading her husband to an admission of the impossible argument he is making. Then recurrent confirmation token *huh* is used four times to explicitly invite an answer. Steven's response *perhaps* at line 794 is merely to answer her last yes-no question *haven't you got it wrong*, which can be interpreted as his admission to having made an invalid statement in the prior turn.

It is noteworthy that the wh-interrogative *what are you talking about*, which appears twice in lines 792 and 795, is not seeking information here, but functions as the negative assertion "you are talking nonsense". These questions are conductive because of their epistemic strength, which is asked from a position of knowledge (Heinemann, 2008). How the question is understood by the other interlocutor depends on the interaction. The ambiguity of *wh* question allows the other interlocutor to treat it as a genuine question of information, and provides an opportunity for the recipient to maintain his or her opposition. Gina's disagreements are mitigated by her laugh in between the challenges. There is a possibility that Steven's rebuttal at the beginning is designed as a means to tease his wife, and that he is being sarcastic in making his counterclaim. Therefore, both participants perform in a jocular manner through the disagreement game.

(28)

- 107           S    你有打電話給他嗎?
- 108           E    沒有!他在大陸忙
- 109 →       S    你怎麼知道他在大陸? (2.0)
- 110           E    他在大陸
- 111           S    他<想去>大陸不>曉得<有沒有去大陸?
- 112           E    好像有去
- 113           S    有嗎? (15.0)

(Eirik 59, Norwegian & Sally 50)

- 107           S:   【Have you called him?
- 108           E:   No! He is busy in China these days.
- 109 →       S:   How do you know he is in China?
- 110           E:   He is in China.
- 111           S:   He wanted to go to China, but we don't know whether he went there or not.
- 112           E:   It seems to me that he did.
- 113           S:   Did he? (15.0)】

The last example of questioning is chosen for a similar purpose. Apart from *why*, *how* can also be problematic for interpretation as a rhetorical or genuine question. In extract (28), Sally and Eirik, a Taiwanese-Norwegian couple living in Taiwan, are discussing whether their friend is in China or not. Eirik came from Norway, and had spent several years in Taiwan during his childhood with his parents, who were missionaries at that time. He is a multilingual in a number of languages, a part time translator, a language teacher and a househusband. The first slot begins with Sally's question *Have you called him?*. Eirik answers *No! He is busy in China* as a reason to support his assumption that the friend went abroad and was too busy to be disturbed

as an excuse for not calling him. The second slot is a further question by Sally about how Eirik can be sure that the person is in China. The disagreement is shown in Sally's question by challenging her husband *How do you know* at line 109, which can appear to be as a rhetorical question, and it also serves the function of accusation. His reply is simply a positive restatement without any further supportive evidence. She considers his assumption as an unreliable piece of information. From Eirik's response, it seems he treats the *how* question as a challenge, because he assures his epistemic stance by repeating *He is in China*, a more assertive claim than a reply. As Kuo (1992) argues, the overt and aggravated disagreement strategies can be valued as a sign of intimacy, because of the speakers' need to present an independent and sincere self. At the third turn exchange, both participants modify their stances. Sally's next turn is a counterclaim with clarification, based on the prior knowledge that the friend only mentioned he wants to go to China, but it was not definite. The strategy Sally employs here is to challenge Eirik's excuse for not making the call, and also attempts to persuade him to contact the friend again. On the other hand, Eirik's claim becomes less certain. Questioning can be seen as challenge, rather than genuine interrogation. This episode shows three continual turns in the form of questions, including two yes-no questions (line 107, 111), a rhetorical wh-question (line 109), and a tag question (line 113). In Sally's last turn, she shows her doubt in a yes/no question, which is designed to constrain the recipient's response (Tracy & Robles, 2009). Eirik's reaction is to drop the discussion, which can be seen as resisting her assumption (*ibid*).

In addition to the eight episodes of questioning above, 12 examples of swear words are chosen to demonstrate another type of aggravated disagreement.

#### 4.3.2 *Swearing as Aggravated Disagreement strategy*

Swearing is deemed as behaviour to express anger aggressively and react to frustration (Montagu, 2001; Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). Swear words often contain non-literal meaning taboo words, and it is formulaic and emotive language, which functions as interjections (shit, bitch, God, bloody hell), emphasisers (what the fuck), or expletive slot fillers (bloody, fucking) (Ljung, 2011). It is categorised as one of the aggravated disagreement strategies, given that swearing is assumed to possess strong emotional associations. In the analysis of multilingual couples' disagreement, the focus will be directed to the emotive function, which is a direct expression or reflection of the speaker's attitudes and feelings. Interestingly, swearing can be used in a jocular way in multilingual intimate relationship.

Table 4-3 shows the swear words occurring in multilingual couples' disagreement, with grade A as the most offensive, and grade D as the least offensive. 64.52% of participants prefer to use their first language to swear. As Dewaele proposes, speakers find their native language more powerful and emotionally expressive (2004). Wives do use offensive language less frequently (14 times) compared to husbands (17 times), but not significantly so. In addition, contrary to previous research, when women use offensive language, they do not necessarily use less offensive words in response to their spouses. It is arguable whether some expressions (crap, bitch, screw) are considered swear words or not, given that the terms are used for description, rather than addressing the interlocutor. According to Jay and Janschewitz (2007), it is difficult to separate the connotative meanings from denotative intent within swear words. The taboo term *bitch* is more likely to be used connotatively as a verb to make spitefully critical comments instead of mother theme taboo words. On the other hand,

*screw each other over* is used metaphorically to mean “cheat” and “swindle”, and seems to lose its sexual taboo synonym to some extent (Ljung, 2011). The expletive epithet *crap* is a scatological term considered to be mild swearing.

*Table 4-3 Swear words in multilingual couples’ disagreement*

Swear words	Grade	Languages	Gender	Number
媽的(mother’s)	A	L1	M	2
他媽的(his mother’s)	A	L1	F	1
狗屁(bullshit)	C	L1	M,F	2
屁(farting)	C	L1,L2	2M2F	4
suck	C	L2	F	1
crap	C	L1	M	1
bitch	C	L1,L2	2M2F	4
screw	C	L1,L2	M,F	2
bloody	C	L1	M	2
bloody hell	C	L1	M	1
fucking hell	B	L1	M	1
fuck	B	L2	M	2
God	D	L1	2M,3F	5
gosh	D	L2	F	1
for God’s sake	D	L2	F	1
for Christ’s sake	D	L2	F	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>3A3B17C8D</i>	<i>20L1,11L2</i>	<i>17M,14F</i>	<i>31</i>

Extracts 29 to 37 are examples of swearing in multilingual couples’ disagreements.

Five episodes are from conversation between Bjorn and Paola, two from Ken and Fanny, another two from Maria and Tony, in addition to two individual cases. The occurrences of swearing indicate the use of swear words is a matter of linguistic habit, as exemplified by the excerpts provided below.

(29)

- 335        P    啊我先化妝,你幫我,我有一點感冒啊,你幫我-  
336                你幫我泡一杯茶來喝吧!  
337 →    B    媽的!要出去了還泡茶?  
338        P    快點啦!拜託啦!  
339        B    好啦好啦

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 335        P: 【Ah I will put on makeup first, you help me, I have a cold, you help me-  
336                can you make a cup of tea for me?  
337 →    B: Mother's! We are going out and you still want to make tea?  
338        P: Hurry up! Please  
339        B: Alright, alright】

In excerpt (29), Paola and Bjorn are preparing to go out to visit friends, and Paola makes a request for a cup of tea, while Bjorn is waiting for her to put on her cosmetics, and then they leave for lunch. The disagreement begins with Bjorn's indirect rejection. He swears and complains there is not much time. Paola demands and begs her husband to make tea for her, and in the following turn Bjorn agrees to her request by uttering the agreement token *alright*. Bjorn's utterance (line 337), prefaced by a mother theme swear word (Grade A), shows his frustration in response to the request from Paola. By swearing, Bjorn displays his affective stance explicitly. His rhetorical

question *We are going out and you still want to make tea* is a statement of unwillingness. The swear words indicate the intense emotion of the speaker's impatience and annoyance following Paola's request. Unlike what Dewaele (2004) observes that women perceive the strength of swear words more strongly, the emotional expression seems not have any impact on Paola's L2 swear word use. It is in line with Chiaro's observation that swearing in a language other than the speaker's first language seems more acceptable (2012), in this particular case, the swearing occurring in Chinese. Paola employs a different strategy of being affectionate in response, and persuades her husband successfully. This episode ends with Bjorn's submission. Submission can result from the strategies the participant uses, such as affection acts. Unlike other researchers who regard submission as "admitting defeat or being wrong" (Norrick & Spitz, 2008), it would appear that "giving in" is oftentimes acceptable for the couple under discussion (cf. also Chapter 6).

(30)

402 B 嘿啊運氣好啊,啊輸的時候妳怎麼不講?

403 P 啊那<不能講>啊,>人家<=

404 B 嘿

405 P =>這樣要<用跑的嘛,輸的「就沒」有面子嘛@

406 → B 「是嗎?」>媽的咧<,手機沒拿到,

407 現在又跑一趟不是又花六百塊油錢?

408 P 啊誰叫你,誰叫你喝一喝喝到喝到暈了?

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

402 B: 【Heya, lucky, ah why don't you say so when you lose?

403 P: Ah then < cannot say > ah, >I<=

404 B: hey



- 405 P: in this case have to run away, 𐀀losers𐀁 lose their face
- 406 → B: 𐀀 do they? 𐀁 Mother's! forgot the handset,
- 407 now we have to go there again, doesn't it cost extra 600 dollars for the petrol?
- 408 P: Ah who forced you, who forced you to drink until you were so drunk that you passed  
out? 𐀀

The same swear word can be seen in episode (30), where the couple are discussing the responsibility for forgetting the mobile phone, which has been left in their friend's place when Bjorn was drinking with friends and Paola was gambling. The conversation begins with Paola's self-praise on the extra money she earned. Bjorn responds in a sarcastic way by questioning her *why don't you say so when you lose*. She answers jocularly by performing that she has to run away in the case of losing. The use of humour as a discourse strategy to mitigate disagreement will be discussed in 4.3.5. Her humour fails to mitigate the disagreement, as Bjorn challenges her by using a tag question. A more heated phase occurs when Bjorn utters swear words (line 406), and notes the extra expenditure on the trip back for the mobile phone. The mother theme expletive is used between a tag question and a negation interrogation, which serves a similar function as discourse markers to structure his verbal exchange (Dewaele, 2010). Remarkably, it deictically points to an object, rather than to the addressee (Ljung, 2011). For Bjorn, swearing is treated as an aggravated disagreement means. He is accused of being drunk by Paola in the next turn, where she attributes the consequence to him. By doing so, she also voices her oppositional stance.

(31)

- 058 P 你說!難道你-你( . )可以( . . )幾天不跟我講話?
- 059 ( . . )對不對?

060 → B 狗屁呀!上次都-快一個月,我們都:冷:戰了一

061 個月,現在

062 P 爽不爽? @@

063 B 不爽!妳要好好檢討一下啊

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

058 P: 【You tell me! Don't tell me you-you (..) cannot talk to me for several days,

059 (..) can you?

060 → B: Bullshit! Last time it was- almost one month, we both: gave each other cold: shoulder

061 for a month, now

062 P: Aren't you ecstatic? @@

063 B: Not ecstatic! You have to take a good look at yourself. 】

Excerpt (31) begins with Paola's strategy of silence during their recent quarrels. There is an outburst of swearing 狗屁呀 (*bullshit*, literally dog fart) from Bjorn in response to Paola's tag question of "*can you not talk to me for days, can you*" at line 60. Bjorn shows his frustration and vents his anger through swear words, given that the main purpose of swearing is to express emotions, particularly anger and frustration (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). The interjection also serves the function of signalling an aggravated disagreement. When interjections occur in initial turn position, they usually function as intensifiers as Norrick notes (2009). His stance builds on the length of being ignored for nearly one month, instead of a few days as Paola claims. Paola's successive turn indicates she approves of what he declares by throwing out a yes-no question 爽不爽 (*aren't you ecstatic*) to shift the focus. Once a discord sequence has been established, agreement is no longer the unmarked option (Gruber, 2001). As a result, Bjorn answers her question negatively to express his anger (line 63). His oppositional position is predictable in the heated disagreement.

The three episodes above demonstrate the use of the husband's swearing in the discourse of disagreement. Paola, a non-native Chinese speaker, also employs a similar strategy with swear words. Extracts 32 will show how Paola undertakes the swear word 屁 (*farting*) in her L2 Chinese to express her strong emotional force.

(32)

- 486        B    妳講妳自己就好了啊>我::本來就<很幽默  
487                的人了  
488 →    P    <屁呀>  
489 →    B    屁?  
490        P    嘿@  
491        B    一個女孩子(0.5)本來就要溫柔一點了啊 (0.7)

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 486        B: 【You talking about yourself is enough> I::basically < a very humorous  
487                person.  
488 →    P: <FARTING>  
489 →    B: farting?  
490        P: hey @  
491        B: A girl is supposed to be more gentle (0.7)  】

Noticeably, the other interlocutor, Bjorn, strongly reacts to his wife's swearing by repeating the same swear word with a raising intonation in extract (32). The rhetorical question together with swear words aggravates his disagreement. Unlike other scholars' contention that repetition of the primary speaker is a strategy to seek agreement (Pomerantz, 1984; Sebba & Tate, 1986), the repetition of swear words in

the extract is used for ironic purpose. It evidences an overt disagreement through the display of repeating the opponent's turn, or minimal reformulation, as Gruber puts it (1998). In addition, Bjorn's reaction to his wife's swearing is more salient, where he remarks that women should speak more gently. It has been argued that a common shared value can be simultaneously recalled through a speakers' partial repetition (Norrick, 1998). Here Bjorn implies his wife's use of taboo terms is inappropriate, albeit 屁 (*farting*, Grade C) can be seen as a rather mild swear word in Chinese. Paola swears to express her epistemic stance towards the correctness of the previous turn. Her swearing serves the purpose of contradicting her husband's statement that he is a humorous person (line 488), and she bursts out laughing after her husband's repetition of the same swear word. Bjorn's repetition is to doubt her oppositional stance, but can also be deemed as the information checking marker to examine whether the word corresponds to her thinking or not. The accordant token 嘿 (*hey*) indicates she realises the emotional force of swearing to her husband and seems to enjoy it. Bjorn's answer to her confirmation of swearing is an indirect complaint, assuming women should not swear. It can be interpreted the emotional weight of swearing in Paola's L2 is not as powerful from a native speaker's (Bjorn) perception. On the other hand, the native speaker himself is a heavy user of swear words, and it is likely that his wife has learned the swear word from him. Indeed, the emotional impact of swearing is associated with the individuals' experiences and cultural values of the language conventions (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008).

The following examples (33-35) are taken from the conversations between the British-Taiwanese couple, Ken and Fanny to display the case of swearing in their L1. In both episodes, swear words are used in the discussion between Fanny and Ken regarding the distribution of housework. They are selected to demonstrate how

humour plays a role in relation to swearing in disagreement.

(33)

- 432 F 你們就>洗你們的衣服我<洗我自己的
- 433 K (°H)
- 434 F 我都是晚(.)禮拜六早上起來洗
- 435 K 沒有關係啊(4.0)我想也是(..)也是弄一些妳的衣服啊
- 436 F 你幹嘛弄?你是要收起來,對不對?
- 437 K 對-當然要收,>因為要:洗衣服<「要」
- 438 F 「不要」假裝那麼
- 439 賢慧,好不好? @@
- 440 K @@
- 441 → F 他媽的!這不是作秀@@
- 442 K @@

(Ken 40 British & Fanny 50)

- 432 F: 【You just> wash your own clothes, I < wash mine.
- 433 K: (°H)
- 434 F: I'm usually late (.) Saturday morning get up to wash
- 435 K: It's alright. (4.0) I also think so (.) also take care of some of your clothes
- 436 F: Why do you have to? You are going to put them away, aren't you?
- 437 K: Yes-of course I need to put them away because have to wash clothes <「need」
- 438 F: 「don't」pretend
- 439 to be a domestic goddess, okay? @@
- 440 K: @@
- 441 → F: His mother's! This is not a performance.
- 442 K: @@】

As exemplified by excerpt (33), women also use strong taboo words in disagreement. Mention has been made of both genders' expletive use in previous research, which shows that females use strong swear words considerably more often than stereotypes would have predicted (De Klerk, 1992; Bayard & Krishnayya, 2001). Fanny clarifies that she prefers to do her own laundry on the weekend at the very beginning. The husband's offer of organising her clothes is rejected, as Fanny responds in a wh-question as a challenge (line 436). Ken's offer is interpreted as a performance, given that their conversation is being recorded, from Fanny's point of view. The first obvious disagreement indicator can be found in the tag question in line 439, where Fanny states *don't pretend to be a domestic goddess, okay*. Ken's response in laughing without denial provides the permission for his wife's opposite proposition. It can be interpreted as admission for the interlocutor, as the laughter is succeeded by Fanny's swear words. The utterance prefaced by 他媽的 (*his mother's*, Grade A) at line 441, enforces her oppositional stance and vents her anger. Swearing followed by the speaker's laugh indicates a non-serious atmosphere. The couple's shared laughter arises from the playful banter, and it indicates a manifestation of intimacy (Coates, 2007; Chiaro, 2009). None of the participants treats the swear word as an offensive attack. It appears that the degree of the offensiveness is weakened, and meanwhile reinforces their exclusive solidarity in the intimate relationship.

(34)

002 K 好!我-在洗碗了(1.0)你:就你就監督就好了

【okay, I'm- washing the dishes. You: just you supervise me】

003 (3.0)

004 F You missed the bit there

005 → K Bloody hell

006 F @@@@

007 K I'll do that one again then

In episode (34), the swear word is uttered by Ken during the course of washing the dishes. Ken begins his turn with the suggestion that Fanny can be his supervisor to scrutinise his cleaning job in Chinese. His proposal is accepted by Fanny seriously as she actually points out *You miss the bit there* to correct him in English. The unexpected utterance is received as a challenge by Ken. Consequently, he switches to his L1 and swears *Bloody hell* to express his frustration or anger at line 5. The swear word seems to occur uncontrollably in the moment of frustration. No matter if the utterance is performed consciously or unconsciously, it induces the interlocutor's motivation to swear. The curse intensifier is emotionally charged, automatically in nature, and holistically produced to emphasise disagreement (Jay, 2000). Ken's stance is strengthened by the combination of the interjection *bloody hell* and code-switching. Speakers prefer their L1 for communicating anger, feelings, and swearing, also for their mental calculation, and hence first language retains its superior status (Dewaele, 2010). However, the strong emotional expression does not seem to aggravate the disagreement. Fanny's laughter in response to her husband's swearing shows that she does not feel offended. The jocular attitude also softens the disagreement and Ken accepts her guidance. Both cases serve to demonstrate that this couple choose to swear in their mother tongue to express their surprise or anger.

(35)

557 P I:: know(.)

558 the thing is

559 → A someone in this country to give them BLOODY  
560 eggs(1.0)<OR> you can <substitute> with  
561 chicken eggs

562 P It's different.

(omit 563-585)

586 A I.I'm gonna go to the Waitrose website and  
587 → >fucking hell find out how much< a duck egg costs

588 P Go @ ahead @@

589 A if you can <buy>- (..) an ostrich egg from  
590 → Waitrose(.) <you can buy> a bloody duck egg  
591 (3.0)

592 P Okay, if you say so.(7.0)

(Andy 38, South African & Pisces 38)

Example (35) is taken from Andy's discussion with Pisces about where to procure a particular ingredient for rice dumplings, for the purpose of examining an English native speaker's frequent use of swear words . The three swear words, *bloody*, *fucking hell*, *bloody*, are all uttered by the English native speaker. According to Ljung, *bloody* and *fucking* are used as intensifiers, which have been de-semanticised to place emphasis on a following noun (2011). It is important to note that the grade of swearing changes in parallel with the disagreement.

Andy's position is based on the possibility of finding duck egg suppliers, given the sufficient amount of ducks in the UK, whereas his wife claims the quantity of the ingredient is scarce. The first swear words occur in line 559, where Andy uses the expletive intensifier, "*bloody*" (grade C) in a loud voice to show his irritation. Then he



proposes chicken eggs as a substitute for duck eggs, which is rejected by Pisces in the succeeding turn. The wife contradicts the substitute by asserting these two ingredients are completely different. Their disagreement is maintained for another minute, and Andy insists on the possibility of finding a duck egg. The second swear word at line 587 appears to be a much stronger one, where Andy expresses his frustration by swearing *fucking hell* (Grade B) to strengthen his speech act force. Similar to the prior example, the perception of the swear word does not seem to favour or hinder the disagreement (Dewaele, 2004). This can be observed by the laughter at line 588, where Pisces confidently encourages Andy to prove his viewpoint, which can be seen as an agreement token. Her utterance is in response to the stance her husband is taking, yet the participant does not seem to be offended by his swearing. Rather, she treats Andy's strong affective stance as a humorous reaction. It explains why Andy chose a less offensive swear word later. The last swear word is used in an identical situation as the first one. Andy makes a comparison between duck and an even rarer product, ostrich eggs, in order to support his argument. The utterance with the intensifier *bloody duck egg* (Grade C) can be found at line 590. In return, Pisces utters an ostensible agreement token *okay*. The affirmation marker is preceded by a noticeable three-second silence, and followed by a conditional conjunction *if*, which indicates her oppositional stance remains, yet she refuses to continue the discussion.

From the extracts 33 to 35, the other interlocutors' reaction towards swearing in a different language appears to be amused, rather than offended. There are some examples which demonstrate different attitudes when participants perceive swear words in the disagreement. Religious oaths can also be used for emphasis in swearing. *My God*, *for God's sake*, and *for Christ's sake* are interjections to strengthen the force of a speech act to express surprise, pain, fear, anger, disappointment or joy (Ljung

2011), as exemplified by extracts (36) and (37). This category has been identified as the least offensive category of swear words (Grade D in Table 4-3).

(36)

393 C 可是-對我來說第一他們是外國人(..) 第二 (2.0)

【But-to me, firstly they are foreigners(..) Secondly】

394 → <I (am) just saying, Ali> (1.0)

395 A ° I'm listening, too °

396 C 就是-even they are my family,and I- need to call: them

【That is-】

397 (2.0) you know-mom,and oh sister in law .but- for me

398 they (are) still strangers(.) 因為我不認識他們啊(.) °你知道

【Because I don't know them ah (.).° You know

399 我的意思嗎°?

what I mean°? 】【

400 (12.0)

401 A 所以就文化跟語言°還好所以-°

【So it's culture and language. °That's alright,so-°】

402 (3.0)

403 C 我沒有說你媽媽對我不好. 我說 ㄟ可是因為我不認識她ㄟ

【I didn't say your mum treats me badly. I said ㄟ but because I don't know herㄟ 】【

404 A ㄌ I didn't say- <BABY> ㄌ

405 → <MY GOD>(2.0)(SIGH) °算了°(°H)

【Never mind】

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

In episode (36), Chin attempts to provide her reason for rejecting the proposal of moving to live with Ali's parents in the prior turn. Their conversation took place in the living room on a Saturday afternoon. Ali discords on the points she made by minimising the influence on her. The wife's utterance can be interpreted as a self-repair for her previous statement about her attitude towards her mother in law. Denials in response to accusations that are produced without delay might "allow accusers to repair or mitigate accusations" as Garcia notes (1991, p. 821). However, Ali's turn prefaced by *My God* shows his surprise when receiving his wife's explanation. Her utterance *I didn't say your mum treats me badly* indicates that Chin assumes Ali's mother might treat her badly, or at least she shows her concern. By seizing the floor and interrupting Chin's utterance, Ali shows he is eager to clarify his opinion about the issue. His frustration can be seen, where he uses the interjection *My God*, followed by a noticeable long pause. Subsequently, a sigh preceded by Ali's final utterance *Never mind* is used as a signal of withdrawal.

(37)

- 864 T 我告訴妳. 這種吃法 (.) 這種倒頭飯在-傳統習俗是  
865 死人在吃的  
866 M 什麼死? 我們: 我們是Christian. 我們又不是-  
867 T 對(..)但是(.)這個習俗它是一看到就不吉利啊  
868 → M 唉唷! >for Christ's sake! 我們只是在家裡  
869 頭吃飯 < ɹIt doesn't ɹ matter, does it?  
870 T □ ɹ那-這樣我們ɹ (.) 何必要把(..)  
871 它弄成這樣咧? (1.0)  
872 M >那你何必一定要把那些什麼傳統習俗 ɹ什麼有=ɹ  
873 T ɹ這個東西ɹ

- 874 M =的沒有的<(.)WHAT?
- 875 T 妳不是喜歡吃這個?
- ( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)
- 864 T: 【I am telling you. this way of eating( ). this upside down rice in- tradition,
- 865 is for dead people.
- 866 M: What death? We: we are Christians, we are not-
- 867 T: Yes (..) but (.) the practice gives you bad luck as soon as you see it.
- 868 → M: Aiyo! >For Christ's sake! We are just having a meal at home, <
- 869 ⊢ It doesn't ⊣ matter, does it?
- 870 T: ⊢then-so we ⊣ (.) why do we have to (..)
- 871 make it like this? (1.0)
- 872 M: >Then why do you have to bring those ⊢ what=⊣ traditional convention,
- 873 T: ⊢This thing⊣
- 874 M: =whatever <(.)WHAT?
- 875 T: Don't you like to eat this? 】【

The last extract is taken from the disagreement between Maria and Tony. The episode is chosen on account of the couple's different cultures and religions. They disagree about how the rice should be placed as depicted in a recipe book. Tony begins his turn by reminding Maria about the taboo in Chinese tradition that upside down rice is served only for dead people. Maria responds with a wh-question, challenging the association with death. In return, Tony reiterates his viewpoint by associating the convention with bad luck. Maria reveals her Christian affiliation explicitly, whereas Tony's sense of Chinese tradition is implicit. In some contexts, identity categories are unmarked, such as Christianity, but unmarked identities may be reproduced, challenged, and reinscribed with identity markings at the local level (Bucholtz & Hall,

2004). Maria's response *aiyo, for Christ's sake* (line 868) indicates her disalignment with such Chinese rituals, and the expression is strengthened by the swear word. There is code-switching involved in her turn, and she seems to favour English for strong emotion. When she challenges Tony with a tag question *It doesn't matter, does it?*, preceded by Chinese clarification *We are just having a meal at home*, Maria switches back to English again. Maria's intention is to persuade her husband to accept the upside down rice as a creative decoration, rather than a representation of Chinese ritual. Participants' language choice is strongly linked to their frequency of using that particular language, given that they feel it is more useful, and swearing in the language seems more powerful (Dewaele, 2010, p.147). Maria tends to use her second language, English to express her strong emotion. Her first languages are Chinese and Italian, which are not the dominant languages, since they live in the UK. One can expect that the emotional force of the swear words in her L1 is weakened (Dewaele, 2004). The swear word serves the function of enhancing her emotional force, even though the speaker opts for her L2. In spite of the mention of Christ, the oath has lost its meaning in swearing and been reduced to merely emotive interjection (Ljung, 2011). It is used to express the speaker's stance towards the other interlocutor, rather than invoking religious connotations. Stenström (1994a) defines *for God's sake* as a *booster*, which signifies that what the speaker is saying is significant (p. 46). An overlap can be observed between lines 869 and 870, where Tony gains the floor and interrupts Maria's utterance. Their disagreement appears to be heated, and the negotiation turns out to be more intense after her swearing. The view taken here for categorising those words as swear words is that it is impossible to indicate where a given expression stops belonging to swearing, and the scale of taboo strength cannot be a criterion for swearing status (Ljung, 2011, p. 67).

Another noteworthy point in the episode above is that religion can be used as an index of stancetaking in interaction. Different opinions about convention are salient in the disagreement. Scholars locate identity as an intersubjectively achieved social and cultural phenomenon (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Lee, 2005; Baynham, 2006; Damari, 2010). Couples create similarity for themselves through shared values, personality, education, or profession to construct non-national identities (Piller, 2002). Tony and Maria share similar religious identity, even though Tony is a Protestant and Maria is a Catholic. Maria refers to being Christian in her utterance at line 866 to contradict the prior turn. Noticeably, the reference to religion is the only term in English and the rest of her utterance remains in Chinese. Code-switching is used to highlight her stance, where Maria switches to English for her Christian identity. It confirms what Jaffe argues, position taking through language choice is already loaded with sociolinguistic meaning, both on the status and relationship between languages, and on the salience of identity and cultural membership associated with the language (2009, p. 119). In response to Maria's reference to religion, Tony answers in partial agreement by uttering the affirmation token *yes*, *but* which he aligns with the statement of being a Christian. However, the difference is disclosed when Chinese tradition is engaged. Tony shifts the focus to the symbol representing bad luck in his second turn. Maria shows her frustration by swearing religious oaths, which have been discussed in the previous section. The wife first mentions their Christian identity (line 866), and here she uses explicitly celestial Christian swearing *for Christ's sake* to enforce her faith again. In Christian culture, there is no need to serve food for the dead, whereas the concept is widespread in the Chinese tradition. Maria proposes to serve the rice in the same way the recipe book recommends, yet her proposal is rejected due to the association with death. For Tony, the ritual of serving food for the dead people is part of Chinese culture, whereas Maria treats it as a different religious ceremony. She

attempts to downplay the convention in their family setting, but in vain. Tony employs the strategy of topic shift and ends the disagreement.

#### 4.3.3 *Reference to Nationality as Aggravated Disagreement Strategy*

The last strategy for aggravated disagreement is reference to nationality. Identity is about similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2008). Multilingual couples are part of discourse communities, where difference is based on national groups they belong to (Piller, 2002). The explicit dichotomy of “same” and “different” related to the participants’ ethnic background and their national origin can be found in the following examples (38 to 42). The four episodes are chosen because partners mention their nationalities, or certain nationals as a strategy to intensify the disagreement.

(38)

- 013 S 妳不要那麼囉嗦，今天拿到身份證妳-不能對我那麼  
014 囉嗦  
015 → Z 喔-你現在台灣人,不能對你太壞 〔(.)是〕不是?  
016 → S 〔對!〕 台灣人是-  
017 結婚的之前很-(..) 溫軟  
018 Z 〔溫?溫柔啊〕  
019 S 〔因為結:婚〕 溫柔啊?結婚以後要很兇  
020 Z <hmm>↑?  
021 S 這個是台灣規定的，不能改變  
022 → Z 這個是你:們巴基斯坦>人才這<樣吧? (0.8)  
023 結婚之前都會騙-騙女:孩子

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

013 S: Don't be so verbose! Today (I) got the Identification card, you- cannot be so verbose  
014 to me.  
015 → Z: Oh-You now became Taiwanese, ( I ) cannot be mean to you, ㄅㄣˊ ㄘㄢˇ I?  
016 → S: L Right! J Taiwanese  
017 people are very-(..) warm before getting married.  
018 Z: ㄅㄠˊ ㄨㄤˋ? gentle ah ㄟ  
019 S: Lbecause getting: marriedJ gentle ah? After marriage, one has to be very aggressive.  
020 Z: <hmm>↑?  
021 S: This is regulated in Taiwan. (It) cannot be changed.  
022 → Z: This is you: only Pakistani people> are like this< ? (0.8)  
023 Before getting married, (you) all trick-trick girls.



national belonging. It also reveals his intention to be close to a specific community. On the other hand, Zoe's reply draws the difference between them. She uses a counterattack by changing the focus to Pakistani men's tricks for pursuing women. Both of them employ the same strategic reference to nationalities as an indirect challenge to maintain their oppositional stances.

Another investigation of multilingual couples' identity construction can be pursued based on the coexistence of same and different (Damari, 2010). Similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification (Jenkins, 2008). Discourse of similarity and difference co-occur in multilingual couples' conversations (Piller, 2002). The following examples of Tiffany's positions demonstrate that identities are constructed moment by moment in different contexts. In excerpt (39), she treats British people as "other", the group her partner belongs to, whereas she identifies British working culture as her own later in excerpt (40).

(39)

- 041        T     na ɿthat's(.)yeahɿ
- 042        H        ɿ80% at the topɿ best statistics is
- 043                50% at the time in the UK. and the rest
- 044                of the time (..)it's <snowing(..)=
- 045        T     na- ɿ that's ɿ one thing about uh
- 046        H        ɿ=windyɿ
- 047 →     T     British people are moaning <everything
- 048                >even they got the gorgeous weather
- 049                suitable this summer and you still complain

(40)

118        T     like a- you know, kinda, kinda all over you,  
 119                you know that sort of ve: strong character  
 120                and then try to, you know, screw you over,  
 121                that's all cowards. (1.0)  
 122     →        don't know, I see it's British, it's in London.  
 123                like this weekend, so relax, this is cool! I enjoy it!(2.0)

(Howard 35, British & Tiffany 34)

In excerpt (39), Tiffany reveals her negative value judgment of British people's attitude towards the weather along the lines, *British people are moaning everything, even they got the gorgeous weather, you still complain*. She generalises her partner as a member of the other group, which she distances herself from. Her conventional performance of identity in the later episode (40) shows a positive value of working environment in the UK by describing *I see it's British* at line 122. The later comment is made in contrast to New Yorkers, who seem to be more competitive at work. Tiffany benefits from working in London, and affiliates herself with the working culture. It is important to note that the boundaries of binary "they/we" categories can be re-sited at different times and placed in relation to the questions (Hall, 2003). Multilingual couples tend to reposition their identities in a strategic sense. The last two extracts are selected for the purpose of showing how the couples associate themselves with certain identities in the negotiation of disagreement.

(41)

1086        G     It is, but I am thinking- if already they think that-<two extra>  
 1087                people in the flat makes it crowded(2.0)then- any #mean  
 1088                visit, any visit will be a bother.

1089 S (SNEEZE)(2.0) Gregoire, we are NOT like- Fanny and Julian,  
 1090 → we are not- Parisians. We have LOADs of close friends- in  
 1091 London.  
 1092 G Ya, it's true.  
 1093 S And  
 1094 G Ya, I don't think we'll have a millions for visits  
 1095 S No! that's for sure↑. And- (3.0)

(Gregoire 31, French & Sophie 34)

In the extract from Gregoire and Sophie's conversation (41), the husband's consent shows a similar pattern. They are discussing how to arrange friends' visits, after their babies are born, in the hospital room. The opposition exchanges begin with Gregoire's concern over whether inviting friends to see their new born daughters in their small flat is a good idea. Sophie's answer is determined, and emphasises the difference between themselves and the other French couple Gregoire mentioned. Sophie identifies themselves "what we are not" deliberately in line 1090. She uses the first person pronoun plural *we* to build up the solidarity. and then distinguishes her and her husband from another group, Parisians. By contrasting it with Parisians, the participant strengthens their shared value, which is more sociable. The construction of identity in interaction can shape and be shaped by conversations to negotiate sameness and difference (Jaffe, 2009). Additionally, she refers to another couple's names as a counter example. Perhaps Sophie identifies herself and Gregoire more as Londoners, since she points out the name of the city (line 1091) where they live and have many friends. Gregoire's *Ya, it's true* creates a convergent alignment with his wife, which implies an endorsement of Sophie's stance. It is ambiguous whether Gregoire agrees with "we have loads of close friends in London", or "we are not like Parisians", or

both. His utterance prefaced with *ya* at line 1092, and the following sentence “it’s true” when taken together both indicate his submission.

(42)

- 008        Z    我-(.)這樣看你做事情我就知道了  
009            (1.0)你做事情真是太隨便了!  
010            (8.0)  
011 →    S    那我不是台灣人嗎?  
012        Z    不知道!(2.0)  
013        S    對啊  
014        Z    啊是就是啊>跟我有什麼<關係?(2.0)

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 008        Z:    【I- look at the way you do things I knew it  
009            (1.0) You do things really too carelessly!  
010            (8.0)  
011 →    S:    Then am I not Taiwanese?  
012        Z:    I don't know!  
013        S:    Exactly.  
014        Z:    Ah you are you are. What does it have anything to do with me?  】

The episode above, where Zoe is criticising her husband’s attitude towards work, provides another evidence of reference to nationality as a means for aggravated disagreement. During the line, *Am I not Taiwanese*, Saied utters a rhetorical question (line 11) to challenge his wife. Zoe’s short response *I don't know* can be interpreted as a signal for non-disalignment. Somehow Saied assumes that being Taiwanese would facilitate the process of establishing his career. His strategy of shifting the focus to the

national reference is not received as a good explanation, given that Zoe's next turn *What does it have anything to do with me* cuts out the connection between nationality and responsibility. Identity is a construct which emerges in interaction, and it may not be fully conscious (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). She distinguishes between her own and her husband's attitudes, even though Saied's new nationality depends on the marriage. Identity is a relational concept between self and other (*ibid*). Saied attempts to create the image of his belonging by speaking the same language, accommodating the culture, and having the official identification. Identities are products of multiple relations constructed through symbolic resources (*ibid*). His wife's stance remains the opposite, which has always been "we are not the same".

Doing disagreement in different local contexts refers to the account of interactional purposes and functions along with the act, rather than postulating the concept of politeness or solidarity as its determinant (Georgakopoulou, 2001). The display of aggravated disagreement can be deemed as a common feature of peer culture (*ibid*). Moreover, the direct and aggravated strategic choices reflect the interlocutor's intimate relationship, and the desire for presenting a sincere and independent self (Kuo, 1992). There are times when multilingual couples use different strategies to mitigate oppositions in disagreement contexts, namely through reference to nationality, humour, vocatives, and indirectness, as will be demonstrated through extracts 43 to 45 appearing in Section 4.3.4 below.

#### **4.3.4      *Reference to Nationality as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy***

In the section above, six examples of employing reference to nationality as aggravated disagreement strategy have been discussed. The same strategy can be used in

mitigated disagreement as the following examples will show.

(43)

- 017 S 妳要的是什麼?(1.5)從一開始的問題是不是?  
018 → Z 從以前到現在啊(.)你就是這樣子(..)可能你們巴基斯坦  
019 人都是這樣子我不知道(..)  
020 S 「妳講」  
021 Z 「你就」是(2.0)反正就是(.)把我們都丟在家裡面啊(.)啊你  
022 >自己想做什麼就做什麼<(. )你>想回家<才回家(..)  
023 不想回家你就在外面(.)跟>朋友聊天聊到三更半夜<  
024 (1.5)  
025 → S 好啦,那我就-(..)找那個台北的工作

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 017 S: 【What do you want? (1.5) (It's) the problem from the very beginning, isn't it?  
018 → Z: Since the beginning till now (.), you are exactly like this (.) Maybe you Pakistani  
019 people are all like this, I don't know. (..)  
020 S: 「Have your say」  
021 Z: 「You just」are (2.0) anyway just (.) leave us alone at home. ah(.) ah you  
022 > do whatever you want. <(. ) You only come home when you > want to<.(..)  
023 (If you) don't feel like coming home, (you'll) stay out with > friends and chat till  
midnight. <  
024 (1.5)  
025 → S: Alright, then I will look for the job in Taipei.】

In extract (43), the disagreement involves national stereotypes and self/others identities. It begins with Saied's wh-question *What do you want*, followed by a yes-no

question to check his assumption with Zoe, who is complaining about Saied arriving home late. Instead of answering her husband's question, Zoe uses the time adverbial *from the beginning till now* to claim that it is not an occasional event. Zoe attributes Saied's behaviour to cultural differences by pointing out *Maybe you Pakistani people are all like this, I don't know* (line 18). Such a statement highlights her assumptions about her husband's nationality, as a negative stereotype. When binational couples imagine themselves as belonging to different national groups, the differences based on national identities are oftentimes negatively stereotyped (Piller, 2002). The point being underlined through the use of reference to nationality is that she positions the conversational partner as the "other". The idea of otherness can change one's conception of cultural identity as an inner compulsion (Hall, 2003). Zoe identifies her spouse's behaviour, "hanging out with friends all night", as an indication of being Pakistani. She uses two epistemic uncertainty markers *maybe* and *I don't know* to enclose the strong statement in order to mitigate her criticism. The indication of Saied being foreign can be seen as Zoe's interpretation of an unknown culture. She is aware of the differences between the two countries in terms of unacceptability. In other words, what is acceptable in Pakistan may not be accepted in Taiwanese society. Saied skips the ethnical question and shifts the focus back to what Zoe expects in the marriage, which is to spend more time at home. The episode shows that reference to nationality can function as a softener in disagreement.

There is another issue behind the story. Saied has been looking for jobs, and there might be more offers in the capital city. However, he seems reluctant to leave his family. Zoe's goal is to persuade him to go and find a job to solve their financial problems. She begins the disagreement with the fact that he often spends time with friends at night, so it does not make much difference if he moves out. Saied admits

what his wife claims, and agrees to look for jobs in Taipei at the end. The resolution might not be reached immediately. However, participants tend to collaborate with their partner and endeavour to bring the disagreement to an end (Leung, 2001).

(44)

- 054 M 已經生baby..然後是當媽媽
- 055 F hm-<亂講>！你不會看人(3.0)
- 056 M 沒有我-「我跟妳說真的」
- 057 F 「你不會看人」那>看起來就<是小孩子.
- 058 → (COUGH)應該你(..)不會看台灣人啦↑！(4.5)
- 059 M 我不曉得是她穿的衣服還是怎麼樣？我跟妳講說就
- 060 是真的.她像媽媽(2.0)
- 061 F 是她比較胖(1.5)
- 062 M 不是！(3.0)

(omit 63-64)

- 065 → 都是-那種的台灣人態度這樣,不想要老老的@@

(Monsoekser 43, Nigerian & Fiona 40)

- 054 M: already has a baby.. and then is a mother
- 055 F: hm- < nonsense>! You are not good at telling people's age.
- 056 M: No, I- 「I am telling you the truth」
- 057 F: 「You are not good at this.」 That looked exactly <like a kid.
- 058 → (COUGH) should be that you (..) cannot tell Taiwanese people's age↑!
- 059 M: I don't know whether it was the way she dressed or something? I told you it
- 060 is true. She looks like a mother.
- 061 F: It's because she is chubbier.
- 062 M: No!



(omit 63-64)

065 → M: all is- that kind of Taiwanese attitude which is she doesn't want to look old

In excerpt (44), Monsoekser and Fiona disagree with each other about Fiona's new colleague's appearance and age. The conversation is part of the one hour recording in their living room. Monsoekser came from Nigeria eight years ago and he acquired Chinese after he moved to Taiwan. He insists the lady looks like a mother, whereas Fiona estimates her colleague is still a young girl, in their first exchange turns. Fiona repeats her comment *You are not good at telling people's age* to emphasise her opinion as well as to counterclaim Monsoekser's viewpoint. Her second criticism overlaps Monsoekser's reply preceded by a negation marker *No*, which is an overt disalignment. After Fiona gains the floor, she adjusts her judgment to the extent which only applies to Taiwanese people at line 58. By narrowing down to a certain ethnic group *should be that you cannot tell Taiwanese people's age*, she mitigates her statement of disparaging Monsoekser's observation. The reference to nationality is marked, because Fiona plays the identity at hand as a linguistic strategy, albeit she also draws attention to the otherness of her partner. Her mention of "Taiwanese people" is used to mitigate her prior claim about his lack of observation skills. In return, Monsoekser utters an uncertain comment prefaced by *I don't know*, which shows his stance becoming less definite, and his acknowledgement of Fiona's mitigated discord. Instead of the verb *is*, he alters it to be *like a mother*, which can also be seen as a less certain statement. However, the disagreement is sustained, given that Monsoekser continues to offer his observation about the way the colleague was dressed to support his proposition. A disagreement can be extended when accusations lead to counter-accusations, counter-assertions, or denials (Leung, 2002). His argument is contradicted by Fiona, where she attributes the reason to her appearance *because she*

*is more chubby*. After three oppositional exchanges, Monsoekser's next turn is a short negation *No*, followed by a noticeable silence.

The second reference to nationality in this episode occurs in line 065, where Monsoekser responds *that kind of Taiwanese attitude*. By saying so, his utterance is marked due to the fact that he represents the positioning by his wife that "I am not Taiwanese, so my attitude is not the same". The boundaries between sameness and difference are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference (Hall, 2003). The speaker distances himself from the disagreement, and also reinforces his evaluation by referring to the nationality he does not belong to.

(45/36)

383 C I KNOW(.) couple <time>. But we didn't live together or-

384 just-(2.0)

385 A No(...) (tsk) (1.5)

386 C You know what I mean↓?

387 → A 我->可台灣人都會這樣<做(1.0)不是嗎?

【I ->but Taiwanese people all would do this<, wouldn't they?】

388 (2.0)

389 → C 可是因為-環:境跟-文化不同啊(.)其>實台灣人就算

【But because- the environment and culture are different. In >fact, even Taiwanese people】

390 不太熟<(.)其實我們也>很容易就可以<變:成比較熟(.)因為

【are not so close<(.). In fact, we are> <to become close more easily(.) cause】

391 → 我們都台灣人啊(2.0)

【we are all Taiwanese.】

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

The last example of reference to nationality as a mitigated strategy in disagreement is extract (45), where Chin and Ali are discussing the possibility of living with Ali's parents. Their disagreement begins in Ali's second turn, where he challenges his wife by referring to Taiwanese culture (line 387). The tag question *but Taiwanese people all would do this, wouldn't they?* functions as a request for an account of the discrepancy in his knowledge of Taiwanese tradition. His challenge is based on generalisation and is grounded on the knowledge that in Taiwan, women usually live with their parents in law after getting married. Ali's strategy is to persuade his wife that staying with his family is perfectly acceptable, and in accordance with her own cultural tradition. It also indicates that he considers himself as an insider within the group. Chin's response, prefaced by a Chinese contrast marker *but*, after a long pause avoids a direct answer to Ali's challenge, and attempts to convince the interlocutor that the tradition does not apply to non-Taiwanese people. Although she does not deny Ali's understanding of the family convention, her strategies are to use her identity at hand to reassure her stance. The implication "you are not Taiwanese" became her defence against the relocation to a foreign country, and living with foreign relatives. She offers an explanation of why she feels uncomfortable in the situation of living with people from different cultural backgrounds. By using the terms *Taiwanese* and the first-person pronoun plural form *we* four times in her turn (line 389-391), Chin explicitly shows the disaffiliation with outsiders. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue, social group, including nationality and ethnicity, are negotiations of sameness and differences. Chin's long narrative provides evidence of her nationalism, where she imagines being Taiwanese is different from other nationalities. Her reaction provides a good example for nation as an imagined political community, where members have the cultural image in their mind, even though they never meet their fellow-members (Anderson, 1991, p. 5-6).

Referring to a nationality functions as a device to express strong disagreement, but in a mitigated manner. The husband attempts to deal with the discourse construction of similarity, whereas the wife puts the difference at the centre. Ali retains his positive evaluative stance towards the family reunion, and asserts that culture and language boundaries are not insurmountable and can be overcome.

#### 4.3.5 *Humour as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy*

Humour can serve the function of disagreement diffuser (Habib, 2008). Extracts 46, 47, and 48 will demonstrate how multilingual couples employ another strategy – namely humour, as a means to mitigate their disagreement. Furthermore, humour can also be employed to terminate the disagreement (See 6.7.4).

(46)

- 596 C 你一直說 >不要不要<我也沒辦法  
597 要不然我到法院會打電話給你  
598 A @@°H  
599 C °拜託°  
600 → A 他們「可以抓妳」(2.0)他們抓妳我不會反對  
601 C 「##」  
602 好啊!隨便啲  
603 A @@

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

- 596 C: 【You keep on saying no no. (There's) nothing I can do.  
597 Otherwise, I will call you when I am at court.  
598 A: @@ (°H)

599 C: °Come on°.

600 → A: They ꞑcan catch youꞑ . (2.0) I won't object if they take you to court.

601 C: L## J

602 Fine. Whatever.

603 A: @@ J

In excerpt (46), Chin is desperate to obtain her husband's help to pay for her bills. She exaggerates she might be taken to court if she fails to pay off the debt, and Ali is amused and plays along jocularly by saying *I won't object if they take you to court* at line 600. Irony can be employed to create a ridiculous imaginary scene (Kotthoff, 2009). The husband uses irony to express his affective stance, which indicates he agrees that his wife would deserve the treatment, if Chin is prosecuted by someone from the court. It goes against Chin's expectation when she is looking for sympathy. His laugh (line 598) indicates that he treats his wife's threat as a joke, given that Ali has already offered the concession that he will transfer money to her account in the prior turn (not included here). It seems Chin's performance, which dramatises the situation was to make him feel guilty. However, her exaggeration creates an opportunity that allows Ali to tease her. Ali's reaction is not expected, as Chin responds with an alignment token *Fine*, followed by *up to you* to show her actual opposition. Her expression of anger indicates she falls into his trap, and Ali's laughter is observed again in line 603. A number of linguists regard irony as an aggravated communication form, while others attribute the motivation for irony to politeness theory. I agree with Kotthoff's argument that none of the existing analyses are suitable, because the accounts do not clarify what achievements are the primary characteristics of irony in multilingual couples' interaction (2009, p. 51). The husband's reaction might be seen as revenge, due to the fact that he had already

offered his compromise, yet his wife continued her complaint. Ali successfully deploys humour as a softener in the disagreement.

(47)

408 K 好,那就沒關係,那就-:做其他的運動嘛

【Right, that doesn't matter. Then: do some other exercise.】

409 → F 比如說咧?洗碗嗎?

【For example? Wash the dishes?】

410 K Oh-

411 F/K @@

412 F You thought you never ask,> it that right <?@@

413 → K @@妳那麼迫:不及待要洗碗吶?

【You can't wait to wash the dishes?】

414 → F 我是那種人嗎?

【Am I that type of person?】

415 K Hmm- it's team work nay-↑

416 F Is it?

417 K Yeah ㄟyaㄟ

418 F ㄟ洗ㄟ碗也是team work, >我怎麼不知道<?

【washing dishes is also team work? How come I did not know】

(Ken 40, British & Fanny 50)

The second excerpt is given for the purpose of showing a combination of humour and code-switching as a softener in disagreement management (extract 47). Fanny mentions her lack of time to go to the gym this week, so Ken attempts to comfort her by suggesting alternative sports. Fanny utters an unexpected suggestion *doing the*

*dishes* at line 409, which can be seen as a funny punch line, given that her utterance leads to laughter from both parties. The other interlocutor apparently accepts the joke, and collaborates with her. After the joke, Fanny switches to English to seek confirmation from her husband about his surprising reaction. The CS serves as a contextualisation cue here. Ken's response *You can't wait to wash the dishes* is a rhetorical question uttered in Chinese for a similar jocular purpose (line 413). A sarcastic comment and laughter can be seen as signalling the recognition of humour and agreement (Norrick & Babel, 2009). Both Ken and Fanny choose to make jokes in Chinese, but use English as confirmation seeker. The wife continues the game by answering Ken's rhetorical question with a question. The description *am I that kind of person* is usually associated with a negative meaning in the context. However, when used in questioning, it assumes the speaker does not consider herself as one of "that kind of person" who likes to do the dishes in their conversation. The real disagreement occurs after Ken offers a concession in English *it's team work* in response to her comment, by suggesting washing the dishes together. His compromise is not completely accepted by his wife, given Fanny's doubtful tag question. The fact that she chooses the same language to cooperate with her husband's proposal indicates that she will probably compromise later. Code-switching can function as a strategic device for multilingual couples when they disagree. The alignment of code can be used to signal that the participants might align with the proposition, but not at all times. For instance, Fanny's reply at line 413 is in the same code as her husband, but her stance is contradictory. Meanwhile she is making a joke along with code-switching. Here, humour is employed to partially forestall the potentially contentious interaction (Norrick & Spitz, 2008). Multilingual couples can manipulate different strategies based on the context and mood to manage disagreement. The combination of humour and CS serves as one example.

The transcripts above show frequent code switches between Ken and Fanny. Their CS illustrates a striking stance-taking example of the couple. This couple tend to switch languages for contradiction, as it shows at lines 412 and 418 for Fanny, and lines 413 and 415 for Ken. They deploy CS as a strategy to play a game of who should do the housework in a jocular manner. Most of the time, their CS functions as a contextualisation cue, and occurs in an affective stance. At line 412, Fanny code-switches to English, her L2, and takes an epistemic stance towards Ken's attitude. Here, the second person pronoun "you" in the subordinate clause *you never ask* refers to the speaker herself in her husband's voice. The wife's evaluation is uttered in her L2 English, which covers her attitude towards her opinion about the proposition being expressed (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Her proposition is based on the fact that doing dishes is an unexpected offer to her husband. She uses code-switching as a means of questioning Ken's assumptions. Ken's reply in Mandarin does not align with the code, yet affirms his positive evaluation of the act (line 413). Fanny's response, aligning with the prior code in the form of a question, is a mitigated disagreement. She switches back to Chinese when she utters her affective stance. In a way, she gives a cue to her husband that she does not want to wash the dishes. Stance shift itself can function as a kind of contextualisation cue, like CS, to instruct interlocutors "on the nature of the relationship the speaker wishes to project with respect to the form and content of his or her utterance" (Jaffe, 2007, p. 56). Code-switching can be used to mitigate oppositional stances in this case. Arguably, the agreeing token "*hm*" serves the function that Ken acknowledges her indication. The compound of the elongated sound and CS also denotes the significance of his upcoming utterance. The suggestion of doing the dishes as a team might be a mitigated strategy for the disagreement, and reaches a compromise. Fanny's next turn seems to be less certain, as she uses a tag question. After receiving Ken's positive



affirmation marker, she switches again to her mother tongue, Mandarin, for evaluation. Therefore, Ken and Fanny display stances towards English through the affective enjoyment of expressing disapproval or approval, and their CS emphasizes the emotional force.

Humour may at times be employed to mitigate the discord, though not always successfully, as will be exemplified in excerpt (48) below taken from a conversation between Paola and Bjorn about their trip and expenditure.

(48/30)

397 P >昨天的開銷<都>補回來<啊

398 B 不錯啊有得玩又-:沒有花錢

399 P 嗯

400 → B 人家贊助的啊

401 P 對呀，

402 B 還「不錯呀」

403 → P 「你這種」老婆找不到喔！@@

404 B 嘿啊運氣好啊，啊輸的時候妳怎麼不講？

405 P 啊那<不能講>啊，>人家 =

406 B 嘿

407 → P =這樣要<用跑的嘛，輸的「就沒」有面子嘛@

408 B 「是嗎？」>媽的咧<，手機沒拿到，

409 現在又跑一趟不是又花六百塊油錢？

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

397 P: 【> expenses yesterday are < all >paid back<

398 B: Not bad!had fun without cost

399 P: hm

400 → B: People sponsor us

401 P: Ya

402 B: ⌈Not bad ⌋

403 → P: ⌈You cannot⌋ find any wife like me@@

404 B: right, that was lucky! Ah why don't you say so when you lose?

405 P: Ah then (you) <cannot talk >about it. > I=

406 B: hey

407 → P: = in this case, I'll have to< run. Loser ⌈ will⌋ lose face @

408 B: ⌈Do they? ⌋>Mother's<! (You) forgot the mobile

409 phone, now we have to go one more time. Doesn't it cost another 600 dollars for the

petrol? ⌋

The conversation was recorded inside the car, when Bjorn and Paola were driving to a friend's house. The topic was introduced by Paola who intends to earn more compliments from her husband. In the first two slots, Bjorn shows his agreement on the refund for expenses by uttering the alignment token *hm* and affirms that it is sponsored by others. When Paola praises herself for winning in a gambling game and acclaims *You cannot find such a wife like me*, Bjorn begins to express his opinion at variance. Paola's utterance serves as a self-serving strategy at line 403 to claim that Bjorn is lucky to find such a good wife. By doing so, she also introduces humour to their conversation by exaggerating in an ironic intonation contour. Her husband disagrees with her by contradicting the fact she is just lucky to win this time. He provides a counterclaim *why don't you say so when you lose* to support his point of view. The wife's reply is interrupted by Bjorn with a doubtful token *hey*. Then she deploys the same strategy of humour to elucidate that *I will have to run. I lose face*

*when I lose money*, followed by laughing (line 407). Paola jokes about herself in the form of exaggeration and humour to minimise her unintentionally embarrassing personal experience (Ervin-Tripp & Lampert, 2009). The noticeable laughter also validates her jocular manner. However, her humour is not appreciated by Bjorn and he does not attempt to rescue her from the blame. On the contrary, the husband takes hold of the turn and swears which indicates the oppositional propositions remain. He changes the focus from gambling to the mobile phone that was forgotten to account for the extra cost while driving back. The disagreement carries on with discussing who should be held responsible for forgetting the handset. This is an example of introducing humour to mitigate a disagreement, but in vain.

#### **4.3.6      *Vocatives as Mitigated Disagreement Strategy***

Vocatives used as a predictor of disagreement have been discussed in Section 4.2.1. Apart from indicating an undesirable utterance, vocatives can also serve the function of mitigating discord, with exceptional use for aggravating disagreement as well. Excerpts 49 to 51 below will demonstrate how multilingual couples can employ vocatives as different strategies in the middle of negotiation.

(49)

- 241            R    Nex-next time maybe we buy the non-spicy one?
- 242                    (2.0)
- 243    →    H    I like the flavour, sweetie (..) I like the flavour,mm not just the
- 244                    spice on it(SNEEZE)
- 245                    (1.0)
- 246            R    okay, (2.5) °if you say so°(SNIFF) yeah (2.0)

(Hamish 28, Irish & Ruby 25)

Excerpt (49) contains an example of an endearment vocative that is used to soften the disagreement, and the vocative terms are used only in disagreement throughout the conversation. The episode begins with Ruby's concern for her partner's sneezing during dinner, and she kindly suggests buying a non-spicy flavour instead. Hamish's disagreement is mitigated, which indicates his acknowledgement of Ruby's offer. The endearment term *sweetie* (line 243) functions as a softener in the middle position between the repeated explanations *I like the flavour* to enforce his standing point. Without using any strong negation marker, Hamish achieves his goal to persuade his partner as Ruby's utterance shows an affirmative token *okay*. Speakers select a particular vocative to express their feelings and attitude to varying degrees, so the vocative is used as a signal of emotive meanings (Maynard, 2002).

Excerpt 50 is chosen from Ali and Chin's conversation to demonstrate how first names and endearment terms as vocatives function for different purposes in the same disagreement context. The focus of the discussion is about why Chin hesitates to live with Ali's parents and sister in the United States. Chin attributes the differences to identities and attempts not to upset her mother in law (See the analysis of extract 36 and 45). In line 394, Chin's rephrasing utterance *I just saying, Ali* preceded by a noticeable long pause, and combined with code-switching to English, attempts to get her husband's full attention. Remarkably, the vocative, first name, is voiced in a downward intonation and occurs in the sentence-final position, which is regularly employed to demonstrate a particular stance towards the interlocutor (Lerner, 2003). Another one-second pause signals the other side that she relinquishes the floor and waits for Ali's response. After she receives Ali's confirmation *I'm listening*, she

switches back to Chinese to clarify her claim. When Ali realises there is a misunderstanding about what he has said, he seizes the floor and the endearment term *baby* is used to mitigate his oppositional stance. Tannen and Kakava have previously argued that when the disagreement pushes the interlocutors away, affectionate addressing terms bring them closer (2002, p. 31). By emitting a long, deep breath preceded by the swear word, Ali withdraws from the negotiation. Both vocatives in this episode, first name (Ali) and endearment term (baby) are used for the same purpose, which is that of mitigating the disagreement.

(50/45/36)

393 C 可是-對我來說第一他們是外國人(..)第二 (2.0)

【But-to me, firstly they are foreigners. Secondly】

394 → <I (am) just saying, Ali>(1.0)

395 A ° I'm listening, too °

(omit 396-402)

403 C 我沒有說你媽媽對我不好.我說「可是因為我不認識她」

【I didn't say your mother treats me badly. I said but because I don't know her】

404 → A 「I didn't say-<BABY>」

405 <MY GOD>(2.0)(SIGH) °算了°(°H)

【Never mind】

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

A different usage of the first name is demonstrated in the conversation between Maria and Tony. Maria addresses her husband by his first name in English (Tony) to seize the floor (line 733) and to strengthen her force in the disagreement as observed in excerpt (51). Tony and Maria are discussing whether the ingredient of a recipe is

made of rice or not. Maria's second turn *Tony! This is rice exactly, okay* overlaps with her husband's utterance, which shows her eager for disalignment. The utterance prefaced by the vocative serves the purpose of reinforcing Maria's opposition, given that address terms can be composed to strengthen speakers' irritation at the interlocutor and to portend trouble (Lerner, 2003). It is worth noting that Maria tends to address her husband by his English name throughout their conversation. The usage is a habitual choice, given that English is her working language used eight hours a day, and she switches between Chinese and English with her husband all the time. Interestingly, when Maria and Tony participated in the pilot study in which the researcher had an interview with the couple, she addresses him by his Chinese first name as a third person. In addressing her husband by his Chinese name, Maria distances herself from the discussion, and indicates it as a more formal occasion.

(51)

727 M: (° H) @@ 我覺得它弄>這個飯這樣<好可愛喔

728 T: 這種飯.弄成這樣大概基本上「是=」

729 M: 「一」□一個

730 T: 不是.(..)事實上是一種(0.8)它是做一種-(0.5)餅

731 M 什麼↑「餅?這>根本就是<飯」

732 T 「這種是米糕妳知道」這種裡面要放很黏的「東西」

733 → M 「Tony!」

734 這就是飯<okay>?

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

727 M: (° H) @@ I think it makes> this rice this way< so cute

728 T: This kind of rice.made this way approximately in the main 「it's=」

729 M: 「One」 in one bite



(52)

- 307 P 我穿這個衣服好不好看?
- 308 → B 還好
- 309 P 還好就代表, 代表不好看
- 400 B 對呀, 妳再換一件吶(.)
- 401 P oh
- 402 B 妳穿-紅色的看看
- 403 P 好(OPEN AND CLOSE THE CLOSET)
- 404 hm (tsk)這樣好像不配啦, 不要了啦! 你看好像不配啊。

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 307 P: Do I look good in this outfit?
- 308 → B: So so.
- 309 P: So so means, means not good.
- 400 B: Yes, you could change for another one.
- 401 P: oh
- 402 B: Try- the red one.
- 403 P: Okay. (OPEN AND CLOSE THE CLOSET)
- 404 hm, (tsk) this doesn't seem to match. No! You see, they don't seem to match.

In extract (52), Paola requests her husband's opinions about her clothes, and her Taiwanese husband's answer is an indirect one. Bjorn expresses his vague comment *so so* in the second line, which can be considered an indirect way of saying "I don't think it looks good on you, but I do not want to make you feel bad". Such a comment elicits Paola's reiteration to get the idea straight at line 309, "so so actually means not good". In text-centred indirectness, recipients must determine for themselves why and how the signal is interpreted (Brenneis, 1986, p. 341). Bjorn immediately confirms



her interpretation, and feels encouraged to express his proposition directly after that. “You should change for another one” is a counterclaim, but is treated as a following comment, and the husband already secures himself against upsetting his wife. Regardless of his suggestion for a red blouse being rejected, at least there is no extra work to be done for any communication breakdown.

(53)

628 C 你不想去就算了

【Forget about it if you don't feel like going】

629 A 我沒有說我不想~去~啊

【I DIDN'T SAY I DON'T FEEL LIKE GOING】

630 C 你上次說你不想去呀

【You said it last time that you don't want to go】

631 A 她願意請我去我就=

【She is willing to invite me, so】

632 C (SNIFF)

633 A =我已經跟她說 ok 了啊

【I already told her okay】

634 → C 我是>覺得你不一定要去啊<。沒關係。(…)

【I really think you don't have to. It's alright.】

635 → A WHY?baby, >you already told me you want me going<

636 now you said no? (3.0) 喂↓

【HELLO】

637 C 。I never said that 。

638 A 有

【YOU HAVE】

639 → C 我只有說<你要去>(..)你<可以去>(1.0)那你就說oh-你

640 >你就說你要我去嗎<?(1.0)那你>到底要不要去我也

641 不曉得<啊

【I just said if you want to go, you may go. Then you said oh you-

you asked me 'do you want me to go'? So you at the end, whether you want to go or

not, I have no idea】

642 A ( ° H) (30.0)

The last affective stance with code-switching in extract (53) is drawn from a discussion between Ali and Chin regarding whether Ali will join Chin for her friend's invitation. Their conversation provides a striking example for indirectness between cultures. When it combines with CS, the affective stance is revealed, because switching to one's mother tongue can be a signal of the speaker's stronger emotional state (Dewaele, 2004). The communication problem results from Chin's indirectness, and her husband's misinterpretation of the invitation. There are several opaque utterances that need to be interpreted by the interlocutors. The wife begins her turn with a comment based on the assumption that Ali does not want to go.

From the disalignment in the first two exchange turns, one can easily perceive the couple have misunderstood each other about what the husband meant. By uttering *I didn't say I don't feel like going*, Ali denies his rejection of her friend's invitation, and clarifies that he actually promised her in his third turn. After receiving Ali's clarification, Chin softens her response by saying *I really think you don't have to. It's alright* in line 634. According to Brenneis (1986), text-centred indirection relies on the message itself "both to suggest the intended meaning and to let the listeners know that they should attend to such meaning" (p. 341). Chin initiates the first turn in her

mother tongue to show her evaluative proposition against Ali's acceptance of her friend's invitation. Chin's assumption is "if you do not feel like going, it is perfectly acceptable to reject the invitation", which can be observed in her utterance *it's alright* with a soft voice (line 640), showing her being considerate. However, Ali seems to take her words literally, and is confused by what she meant as his question *Why? baby* (line 635) shows. He enquires from Chin for an explanation in a loud voice and with rapid speed in his first language, which indicates he is losing his patience. Noticeably, there is a three-second pause preceded by the utterance, "*you already told me you want me going, now you said no*", meaning that there is no response from the other interlocutor. Silence can be seen as a means of metamessage, which refers to indirectness in the conversational interaction (Tannen, 1985).

CS are found in both Ali's and Chin's turns, as the couple use both Chinese and English to express different opinions. The first CS can be observed at line 635, where Ali responds in English to ask Chin to explain the change in her attitude. The lengthy silence strongly suggests communication breakdown. Ali switches back to Chinese, with a cry of *hello* to draw Chin's attention. Ali's stancetaking aligns with his L1, English, indicating his frustration and confusion. The phonation *hello* also serves an emotional purpose, as the speakers gets frustrated (Ameka, 1992). Such a claim would make relevant further explanation in ongoing turns, yet Chin offers a counterclaim appearing to set her epistemic state. Chin receives the stance *do you want me to go* as a signal of indirect rejection, whereas Ali simply treats it as a straightforward request. When Chin takes the request as an indication of "I need an excuse to say no", her answer is "if you want to, you may", which also implies the option of not going. Chin's contradiction *I never said that* disaligns in a different code along with the change of her voice to disagree with what Ali claims in the previous turn (line 643).

She opts for English as a means for denial, although a mitigated one. Ali code switches back to Chinese again to contradict her. Chin's following turn in response to Ali's claim is a long clarification in Chinese. It is noteworthy that she switches to English for her negative stance, and uses Chinese to stress her affirmative ones. At line 639, the negotiation becomes heated as Chin utters three sentences continuously with high speed, and switches to her mother tongue. She finally expresses her consideration and confusion to her husband in the last turn.

Remarkably, both participants show their preference of reverting to their L1 to express the stronger emotion, either frustration or anger. It corresponds nicely to Dewaele's argument that first languages retain superior status for multilinguals in communicating feelings, anger, or swearing, and for mental calculation (2010). Ali treats Chin's answer as an encouragement, and decides to accept the invitation as his wife permits. To his surprise, he thought he made a clear decision, but it seems to be an unclear message to his wife. The husband realises there are many layers of misunderstanding and displays his frustration through silence.

#### **4.4 Summary**

It is worth noting that most of the episodes present more than one strategy that couples choose, and the principle of selecting them in a specific category is based on what function it serves in a more significant or obvious way, and hence, some extracts are used more than once, and the categorisation is by no means exclusive.

Disagreement is frequently accompanied by addressing terms, such as first names, appellations, and endearment vocatives. Unlike the use of first names by politicians to

address journalists, which minimizes the social distance between them (Rendle-Short, 2007), first names used by couples often function to distance the intimate relationship. It depends to a large extent on the shift between the social and the personal.

When analysing discourse strategies in disagreement contexts, aspects from a variety of theories presented in the literature review provide the framework to explicate the interaction between multilingual couples. This chapter deals with how multilingual couples initiate their disagreement and how the disagreement is sustained by two types (mitigated, aggravated) of discourse strategies found in the data. Four linguistic features can project the upcoming oppositional stances: vocatives, the discourse marker *well*, apology and complaint. In many cases, couples deploy different strategies to mitigate direct and aggravated disagreement, for instance, endearment vocatives, reference to nationality, humour, and indirectness. On the other hand, discourse strategies can be used to intensify the discord by questioning, swearing, first names or reference to nationality. How these devices function is highly context dependent, and up to personal choices during the interaction. Multilingual couples have more choices at hand to use vocatives in different languages, either to soften or enforce the speech act. There are episodes where the couples allow the other spouses to use aggravated utterances, such as swearing and questioning to maintain the disagreement when the argumentative contexts have been established. They make it explicit to each other that they do not agree with certain issues. A contrasting stance tends to be natural and highly acceptable in couplehood, as being direct can be a signal of intimacy and also indicates they are able to maintain a sincere self. Culturally-bound interaction norms must be taken into consideration in relation to the stance triangle – who is taking what stance in response to what other social actors (Damari, 2010, p. 626). Even in the aggravated disagreement situation, couples can

reach their negotiation goal through clever use of humour. The emotional weight of swear words do not have the same impact on non-native users. That is not to say that multilingual couples evaluate disagreement more positively, but they are able to use different discourse strategies to manage disagreement. Multilingual couples find ways to mitigate the oppositional stances, so tend not to avoid the disagreement.

## **5. Chapter 5. Code-Switching and Oppositional Stances**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 4, how multilingual couples initiate and maintain their disagreements through a variety of discourse strategies have been discussed. Another phenomenon worth noting is why multilingual couples switch from one language to another in disagreement discourse and what stance they take. The focus of this chapter will be how multilingual couples draw on language choices to express affective or epistemic stances in oppositions. Why and how multilingual couples choose their language to communicate, and how stances are related to code-switching will also be analysed. This chapter is organised as follows: The first section will discuss the language choices for disagreement and what factors contribute to that decision. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 will demonstrate how code-switching is associated with two types of stances, namely affective and epistemic stances, and how they operate during discord. I will then attempt to show the relevance of using different stances as an analytic tool by analysing the episodes with a combination of these two types to investigate how multilingual couples deploy code-switching in order to negotiate disagreement. A total number of 22 extracts are selected for the analyses in this chapter.

### **5.2 Language Choice**

For multilingual couples, it is not simply a question of choosing between two languages in a social vacuum. The assumption that multilingual couples will invariably choose the majority language as their communication priority has to be

examined. The issue of whether the participants' language proficiency is a constraint on language choice will also be discussed. Table 5-1 is based on the results of the questionnaire about which languages the couples employ to communicate.

*Table 5-1* The language choices in the multilingual couple domain

<b>Couples</b>	<b>Language choices</b>	<b>Country of residence</b>	<b>Other languages spoken</b>
Andy & Pisces	English + Chinese	UK	Afrikaans, Southern Min
Elko & Winnie	English		Dutch, Chinese
George & Ingrid	English		Chinese, Southern Min
Gregoire & Sophie	English		French, Chinese, Southern Min
Hamish & Ruby	English		Chinese, French, Southern Min
Howard & Tiffany	English		Southern Min, Chinese
Ken & Fanny	Chinese + English		Southern Min
Steven & Gina	Chinese + English		Hakka
Tom & Cindy	English		Chinese, German, French, Hungarian
Tony & Maria	Chinese + English		Japanese, Italian



Couples	Language choices	Country of residence	Other languages spoken
Ali & Chin	Chinese + English	TW	French, Japanese
Saied & Zoe	Chinese		Urdu, English, Japanese, Southern Min
Bjorn & Paola	Chinese		Spanish, English, Southern Min
Eirik & Sally	Chinese + German		Norwegian, French, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, Hakka, Southern Min
Fabrice & Kate	English		French, Chinese, Southern Min, Spanish
Henry & Ayi	Chinese		Tagalog, English, Southern Min, Hakka
John & Olivia	English		Chinese, German, Italian
Kimula & Tina	Chinese + Japanese		English, Korean, Dutch, Southern Min
Monsoekser & Fiona	Chinese		Igbo, English, Southern Min
Steven & Judith	Chinese + English		Southern Min
Vladimir & Jenny	English + Chinese		Russian, Chinese, Nepali, French, Spanish

### 5.2.1 *We Speak English Only*

Generally speaking, from the examples in the UK, multilingual couples' code choice seems to match the language the majority people speak. It is identical to Piller's findings that the use of majority language is higher in English-speaking environments (2002). As I discussed in Section 2.5.2.1, previous assumptions about language preference of the minority language are not necessarily true. One would assume English is the unmarked choice for these couples. However, the relationship between languages and speech activities is by no means unambiguous (Auer, 1995, p. 118). It appears that eight couples use English as the main language to communicate at home, but it is also noteworthy that English is used as a lingua franca for nearly half of the cases. Among these participants, two couples live in the UK, including one Taiwanese-Dutch and one French-Taiwanese couple, and another one in Taiwan. The three pairs, Elko and Winni, Gregoire and Sophie, and Fabrice and Kate, all continue to communicate in the language they have used since the beginning of their relationship. Despite the fact that Winni met Elko in the Netherlands, where English is widely spoken, the intermarriage has not motivated her to learn Dutch. They use English as a lingua franca. Gregoire and Sophie knew each other at university in England and English is the language they have used since then. Sophie has taken French courses since they began a relationship. However, they tend to maintain their habitual choice. The third couple who use English as a lingua franca live in Taiwan, where English is not the majority language. Fabrice learned Chinese for only a year after he married Kate, and Kate picked up French from him based on daily conversation. Neither Kate nor Fabrice is capable of speaking fluent English. However, their grammatical mistakes and limited vocabulary seem not to hamper their conversation. In Taiwan, there is another couple who also chose English to

communicate, John and Olivia, and John is a native English speaker. The conversation was recorded after they relocated to Taiwan from England for one and a half years. John had just begun taking Chinese courses at that time. In the cases of John and Fabrice, their language barrier constrains their code choice. Family bilingualism is dynamic and fluctuates, and requires all the relevant factors to be taken into consideration, including cultural and historical heritage, economical status, as well as the amount of language exposure among others (De Klerk, 2001, p. 200).

John is not an exceptional case. Ten participants are native English speakers in total, and half of them choose English as their daily language code. Tom and Cindy provide an interesting example. Tom has learned Chinese for nearly a decade, but he is not confident in speaking the language. Cindy explicitly mentions that she would rather use the language her husband feels comfortable with. On the other hand, Cindy's high proficiency in English makes the communication much easier. The other four native speakers, Hamish, Tom, Howard, and George all benefit from their wives' fluency in English. Howard and George's casual acquisition of Chinese from their Taiwanese partners ensued after they met. Hamish is planning to take Chinese courses at school. He met Ruby through a French language class, so they both speak another common language. They decided to use English, which happens to be Hamish's mother tongue. The right column of Table 5-1 indicates the hybrid language background of the participants. Multilingual couples tend to make their language choices readily available. Even though the participants claim English is the only medium they use in the questionnaire, code-switching examples are recorded during their conversations. One needs to investigate the actual linguistic practices in any given community in order to understand how the varieties of code- choice are made (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). More details will be discussed in the following section.

### 5.2.2 *Chinese as the Main Code*

There are only four couples whose language choice is Chinese and they all live in Taiwan. Saied went to university in Taiwan, so he possesses proficiency in Chinese. Henry attended an overseas Chinese school in the Philippines where Chinese became his second language and he moved to Taiwan at his early 20's. Both Saied and Henry are capable of coping with the language. It is different for the other two couples: neither Monsoekser nor Paola have learned the language at formal institutions. They acquired Chinese after they relocated to Taiwan. Monsoekser requires the language to embark on his new business. All of the Chinese speaking couples had the knowledge and skills to communicate before their intermarriage, except Paola. She needed the language to make a living; thus, she picked up Chinese quickly.

It is noteworthy that in the group using Chinese as the main code, they all code-switch to different languages during the actual conversations recorded. Urdu and Southern Min (Hokkien) are found in Saied and Zoe's recording. Spanish and Hokkien switches are common in Paola and Bjorn's conversation. Henry uses Hokkien and Ayi uses English occasionally. Monsoekser and Fiona prefer to borrow English words in their discussions. Given that the unmarked choice has dominant proficiency, Chinese is deemed to be the unmarked code in Taiwan. When mixed code is the norm, it is not easy to tell which language is the marked one, as code-switching is their unmarked choice.

### 5.2.3 *Mixed Code*

Code-switching itself can be a language choice as an alternative communication form

(Nilep, 2006). The number of couples who use a mix of languages to communicate is nine, and equally split between the two countries. In the UK, couples mix Chinese and English, whereas different combinations of languages are found in Taiwan. Let us begin with the Chinese-English mixed code first. Couple 1, Andy and Pisces. Andy has known Pisces since high school in South Africa and he decided to learn Chinese because of her. It is Andy who insists on maintaining the language at home, especially after their first child was born. Couple 2, Steven and Gina have lived in Taiwan for nine years and he acquired Chinese during this period. Switching between Chinese and English occurs frequently in Gina and Steven's conversations. Ken and Fanny's story is similar, except Ken has a degree in Chinese studies. This couple have also lived in Taiwan for some years and then relocated to England. Chinese is used as the main code, with frequent switches to English. Couple 3, Ali who has learned Chinese at school for more than three years is fluent in Chinese, whereas Chin uses English occasionally though she is not fluent in English. Ali shifts to his mother tongue in emotional expression or emphasis. Their language code is categorised as a mixed one. In the examples of couples 2 and 3, apparently it is the wives who prefer to use English as a second language regardless of their English levels. Their husbands, on the contrary, prefer to speak their second language, Chinese, to communicate. It is in line with Dumanig's findings (2010) that English is the preferred medium of communication at home and code switching is used by the couples to accommodate each other. The theory that asymmetrical linguistic proficiency places the other partners in a subordinated position as Lee (2005) concluded from his study of Korean-English couples is plausible. The cases are found in both the UK and Taiwan; thus it is not the majority language that counts. The fourth couple who use Chinese-English mixed code is Steven and Judith (couple 4). Steven is from Canada, and learnt Chinese before he met his wife. Both Steven and Judith have proficiency in

these two languages and they are comfortable speaking them.

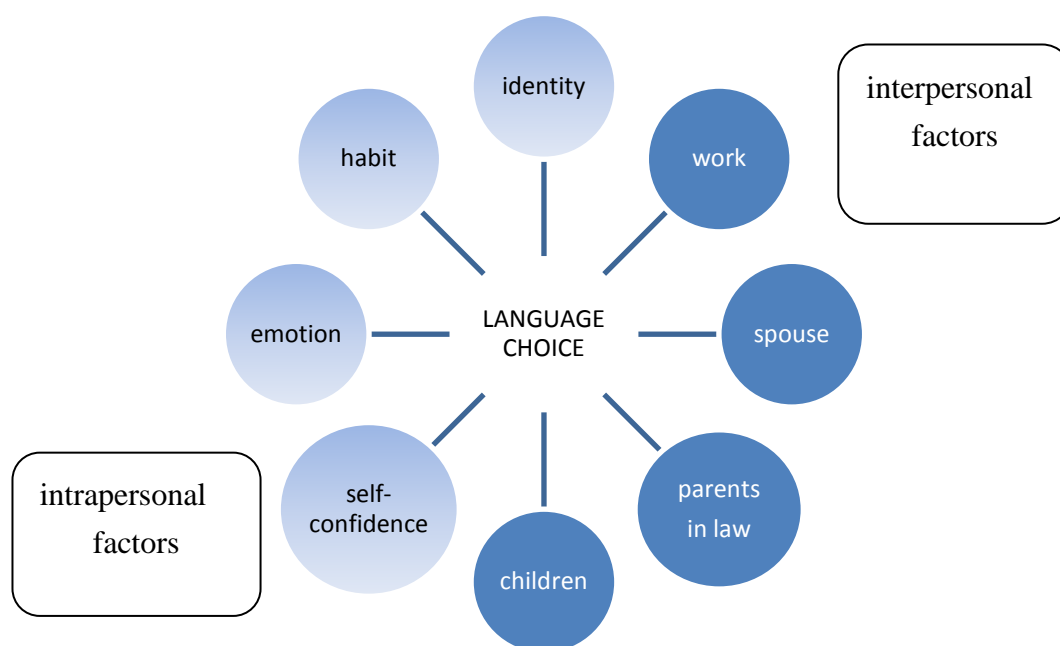
Couple 5, Tony and Maria, is interesting on account of Maria's language choice, English. Maria is half Taiwanese, half Italian and grew up in Taiwan. Chinese is one of her first languages. In the recording of the conversation between Maria and Tony, Maria constantly uses English whereas Tony speaks Chinese. She explains the reason she prefers English is that it is the language she speaks at work. Nevertheless, a large number of turns where Maria switches to Chinese are found during the recording. The only time she uses Italian is to wish her husband good appetite. The language pattern is close to "one person one language" as Tony always uses Chinese and Maria prefers English. Couple 6, Jenny and Vladimir, use English as a lingua franca with some Chinese as supplement. Vladimir, who grew up in Russia, is a self learner of Chinese, and he learns many other languages through the same method. The frequency of switches to Chinese from Vladimir is not as high as Jenny's utterances. Despite the fact he can understand what she means, he usually replies in English.

Apart from English and Chinese, other code choices are found in the data as well. In the conversation between Eirik and Sally, three languages are recorded, namely, Chinese, German, and English. Sally studied in Germany, where she began her relationship with Eirik, and they have been using German as their common language code since that time. A mix of German and Chinese is their code choice. Another mixed code recorded is Japanese with Chinese in the conversation between Kimula and Tina. Tina decided to learn her husband's mother tongue after they married. Kimula possesses high proficiency in Chinese and uses the language at work. They speak bilingually at home with their children.

So far, what language choices multilingual couples make have been discussed. Why and how they make such decisions remains unclear. “Switching away from unmarked choice in a conventionalised exchange signals the speaker is trying to negotiate a different rights and obligations balance as salient in the unmarked one, given the situational features” (Myers-Scotton, 1988, p.167). In Section 2.5.2, the concept of footing has been used to interpret the motivation for multilingual speakers to switch languages. Speakers use CS to change topics or roles, to create contrast between interrogatives and declarations, appositives, and changes in discourse frames (Zentella, 1990). A couple may have different unmarked language preference; however, it will be ambiguous which code is marked if they choose a mixed code. In the following section, the focus will be both on the motivation behind language choice, and the shifts occurring during the conversation of multilingual couples.

#### **5.2.4     *Intra-personal and Inter-personal Factors***

Arguably, language proficiency might be a barrier for speakers’ code choice if he or she lacks the capacity, as for instance, in the case of John and Fabrice. However, both of them are motivated to speak Chinese and there is code-switching during the recording no matter how few they are. In the case of Tom, his reason for not using Chinese is due to low confidence, not ability. Chin’s and Kate’s English may not be fluent, yet they still opt for it as the medium to communicate. Consequently, their code-switching is limited to lexicon level. The factors that influence multilingual couples’ language choices are more complicated than they seem. It is in line with what Tikigawa (2010) argues that neither the second language disfluency nor cultural backgrounds are the determinant for dispute. The factors can be divided into two categories: interpersonal and intrapersonal ones, as displayed in the diagram below:



*Diagram 5-1* Factors of multilingual couples' language choice

Multilingual couples consider intrapersonal reasons as important as interpersonal reasons. However, the relationship of the factors is not linear but intertwined. The language choices are dynamic based on the interaction. When the couples use one code, it is not to say there will be no code-switching in their conversations. Participants may switch to their mother tongue on particular occasions. For example, Saied speaks Urdu to his baby son during the recording. Fabrice tells stories in French to his unborn child. Andy deliberately speaks Chinese if their children are around. Tom confesses that one of his motivations for learning Chinese is for their child in the future. He does not want to be left out when Cindy speaks to the child in her mother tongue. It is clear that children can be a strong factor for parents to speak another language, in addition to the main communicative one. On the other hand, the reason Tom is reluctant to speak Chinese is due to low self-confidence as mentioned earlier. Monsoekser prefers to use Chinese and is very confident even though he frequently makes grammatical mistakes. The habitual factor is also crucial for multilingual



couples in terms of the language chosen when they first meet. Gregoire and Sophie (English), Elko and Winnie (English), and Eirik and Sally (German) are good examples. Their choice might also change with time and location. In addition to the original code, they tend to mix it with a new code when the situation alters. It can be relocation to a different country or a new family member. Another intrapersonal factor is related to emotion. Henry code-switches to Hokkien to highlight his disagreement; Kate uses Chinese for expressions of uncertainty; Paola prefers some Spanish words for intimate acts or vocative terms whereas her husband, Bjorn, switches to Hokkien for intimate acts or challenges. Language can also be deemed as an identity marker when one chooses to speak. Speakers choose their languages to index their attitudes, and identities (Li, 2005). Two participants (Steven and Saied) identify themselves as Taiwanese after they moved to Taiwan, and both of them show their preference to speak Chinese. Tiffany creates a term to describe herself “Twenglish”, both Taiwanese and British, although her language choice is English, and she tends to speak English even to her Chinese friends in the UK. Dual identities are explicitly mentioned in the questionnaire for Ken and Fanny. They describe themselves as both British and Taiwanese. It is interesting to note that the arrangements of their descriptions are different. Ken put British first and Fanny wrote Taiwanese before the other identity. Their language code, a mix of Chinese and English, corresponds to their identities. In the conversation, their language use is the opposite. They choose the other’s mother tongue as priority. Ken prefers to speak Chinese whereas Fanny uses English more frequently under the mixed code.

How multilingual couples make their language choice based on identities, habitual history, self-confidence, and emotion are demonstrated through intrapersonal factors. The interpersonal network around them also plays a significant role as Li *et al.* (2000)

suggest that it provides a more accurate account for language choice if the network variable interacts and overlaps with other social variables. Having children, for instance, can be a positive motivation for parents to learn their spouses' mother tongue. Foreign family members may also act as stimulus for them to speak more foreign languages. Cindy indicates that she speaks English for her husband's benefit, and is aware that she has gradually developed a degree of British identity through that process. Her husband, Tom, attributes his learning of Chinese to similar reasons. He would like to know more about his wife's culture. George mentions his mother in law as an incentive to speak Chinese because he attempts to impress her when Ingrid talks to her family on Skype. Another factor that influences their code choice is work environment. Maria, for instance, uses English most of the day at the office. English becomes dominant in her life and she oscillates in between Chinese and English during conversations with her husband most of the time. Fiona works for an international firm, and she enjoys making use of a certain vocabulary in English.

### **5.3 CS and Affective Stance-taking**

Stances can be divided into two categories: affective and epistemic ones (Ochs, 1996) as discussed in Section 2.2. The first refers to mood, attitude, and feelings whereas the latter is about the speaker's knowledge, belief or certainty (*ibid*). Arguably, Gumperz alludes to the correlation between stance and code-switching when he describes language alternation which relates to "whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge" (1977, p. 18). Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) argue that the linguistic resources for expressing affective and epistemic stance include code-switching. Not until Alexandra Jaffe integrated the notion of stance with contextualisation cues for the evaluation of code-switching, was there an analytic model provided (2007). She

defines stance as “a kind of contextualisation cue that instructs interlocutors on the nature of relationship the speaker wished to project” onto the utterance (p. 56). A recent study based on a similar concept offers a detailed analysis of how the first generation Gaelic-English bilinguals use rapid CS in conjunction with modulating their stances (Smith-Christmas, 2013). Although stance is not transparent in sociolinguistics, the interpretation of a speaker’s uptake of stance requires empirical evidence of conventional association of codes and social meaning as well as the speaker’s repertoires and linguistic performance (Jaffe, 2007). In this section, 9 episodes (54 to 62) are chosen to demonstrate CS for affective stances referring to speakers’ mood, attitude, feeling, disposition, and emotional intensity in relation to some focus of concern in the multilingual couples’ disagreement. CS is more likely to occur in interactions when speakers are familiar with each other (Dorian, 2010; Lamb, 2008). Along with code-switching, I will be providing examples from six couples’ conversations to show how their affective stances are strengthened.

(54)

016 P 要<誘惑你嘛>，°要不要進來幫我洗背背嘛°？(1.0)

017 B <不>要啦！(...)沒興趣.很久@已經沒@興(°H)趣了

018 → P Woah 好啦好啦 (0.3)不要來喔- ↑

019 B hunh ↓

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

016 P: 【want to < seduce you>, ° wanna come in and help me wash my back? ° (1.0)

017 B: < No! >Not interested. (...) (I) lost @ int(° H) erest (in you) a long time ago.

018 → P: Woah, *fine, fine*! (0.3) Don't come. - ↑

019 B: hunh 】

Extracts 54 and 55 are drawn from conversations between the Uruguayan wife, Paola and her Taiwanese husband, Bjorn for the purpose of showing two code-switches to Hokkien from both participants. In the first excerpt, Paola attempts to ask Bjorn to wash her back for her and ostensibly, the husband refuses the request, as seen below. The focus of this extract is Paola's use of code-switching at line 018 when she utters her agreement token in Hokkien "fine fine". The line prefaced by the discourse marker "woah" indicates Paola's surprise. Paola is drawing on a number of linguistic strategies to achieve her goal. In the same turn, Paola firstly expresses her emotion by signalling the displeasure, and then switches to her husband's first language to align with his stance. The switch signals her compromise with the other interlocutor. When CS is used along with other cues, here, the change of the voice quality, the effect will be marked twice (Gardner-Choloros et al., 2000). The code-switching and her stance change in Paola's second turn are in concert with a modification of taking a negative stance. Then she switches back to Mandarin to confirm with him that he should not come. By doing so, her affective stance of feeling annoyed is highlighted. On the other hand, it appears that Bjorn is taking a negative evaluative stance towards Paola's request. His refusal is coupled with the fact he has lost interest in her in a jocular manner. After Paola changes her stance, his response *hunh* with a falling intonation reveals his disappointment or surprise. For Bjorn, his prior statement of no interest serves as humour; thus the disagreement as an unmarked choice is expected in Paola's next turn. However, Paola chooses to align with his stance, as a signal to her husband regarding her change of mood. Paola successfully persuades her husband at the end by a compound of code-switching and other cues which makes the utterance salient.

(55)

226            B    那幹嘛我每次去哪裡妳都要跟? (0.8)十次跟十次

225

227            (..) ㄅhmmㄅ

228        P            ㄌ因ㄌ 為(.)我要-幫你 ㄅ喝啊 ㄅ

229        B                            ㄌ妳 ↑ ㄌ ::要幫我喝?

230        P        @@@@

231 →    B        來這套

232        P        @@@ ( ° H)

233        B        幫我喝咧，妳是去<監督、做憲兵>。

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

226        B: 【Then why everytime wherever I go, you'll go with me? (0.8) Ten out of ten times.

227            (..) ㄅhmmㄅ

228        P:        ㄌBecauㄌ se I want- to help, ㄅdrink ㄅ on behalf of you

229        B:                            ㄌYou ↑ ㄌ ::drink on behalf of me?

230        P: @@@@

231        B: (Don't) *play that game!*

232 →    P: @@@ ( ° H)

233        B: drink on behalf of me ? You go there to< supervise, to be a military police. >】

In extract (55), Bjorn begins his challenge with why Paola has to follow him every time when he spends time with friends if she trusts him. Paola's answer *Because I want to help by drinking on behalf of you* seems insufficient to Bjorn as he seizes the turn to show his strong doubt in interrogation. She makes an excuse to protect herself from criticism by turning the table on her husband for humorous effect, and hence it serves as one of the psychological functions- defending (Hay, 2000). I have discussed humour as a discourse strategy of mitigating disagreement in 4.3.5. Bjorn's utterance continues quickly, which laps over Paola's turn. The overlap between line 228 and 229 shows that Bjorn is taking an evaluative stance towards the prior utterance. In the

following turns, Paola's laugh makes it possible to postulate that she fails to justify her excuse by offering an unsatisfactory account for her behaviour. The CS occurs at line 231 when Bjorn switches to Hokkien, *play that game* which highlights his attitude towards the prior turn which is perceived as a trick. By switching to another language, it also softens the implicit criticism being made at the same time (Moyer, 2000). Paola's consecutive laugh can be seen as alignment which allows her interlocutor to gain the floor to express his opinion. Bjorn's last turn concludes with the rising contour and elongated "you" to indicate that he does not align positively with his wife's stance.

Excerpts 56 to 72 focus on the code-switching patterns of three wives, Fanny, Maria, and Pisces, and their stancetaking. Two episodes are selected for each participant and a comparative table of Fanny's and Pisces' stances will be provided in the analysis.

(56)

273 F 咦? 這個(.) > 我們辦公室有一個<arrogant Australian

【Yi? This (.) >(in) our office there is an】

274 K 喔?好啊(1.0)

【oh, good!】

275 → F So -how do you deal with this er-(2.0) this arrogant

276 → person (1.5) and then 他認為他自己大概最棒了(.)

【he probably considers himself as the best】

277 最聰明了!

【the smartest】

278 K 好啊!(4.0)這:個是個問題嗎?有自信的應該不錯啊

【Good! Is this: a problem? Being confident should be good.】

In extract (56), the disagreement initiates a complaint from Fanny about her colleague and she requests advice on how to deal with the situation. Fanny indicates her negative stance by choosing a different code, English and the adjective *arrogant* in the utterance. Ken's next turn *oh, good*, a non-alignment with the positive attitude, is unexpected for Fanny. Therefore, she clarifies her request for advice and this time code-switches to Mandarin to stress her opinion. Such epistemic stance shows the speaker's doubt toward the information she provided (Keisanen, 2007). There is communication breakdown here. When Fanny describes her colleague's attitude as being the smartest, her evaluation is actually negative. It appears that Ken does not align with that statement since he replies *good* twice, at the beginning of both his turns. Ken's appreciative attitude is marked when he utters the affirmative token followed by a yes/no question *Is this a problem?*, which shows a discrepancy in the information content of what Fiona is attempting to say. The noticeable long pause in line 278 indicates the previous complaint might not get the aligning response it invites. The interlocutor continues expressing his positive proposition towards both being confident and speaking with a loud voice. Fiona uses backchannel *hm* in response to unexpected claims from her husband. It is interesting to note that *hm* or *mm* is usually used to mark agreement given that backchannels normally will not disrupt the primary speaker's speakership, and do not hold the floor (Tao & Thompson, 1991). However, the marker is used differently in this context. Fiona's utterance of *hm* can be seen as an indirect signal of a potential closing point for the current topic (Muller, 2005), or the mental state of contemplating what to say next. Instead of expressing her own stance, the interlocutor employs the backchannel for more than two turns. The CS strategy Fanny adopts serves the function of emphasis and justification, but it fails to

receive support from Ken. She compromises later by agreeing that her colleague is indeed confident, yet her original problem about how to deal with this kind of person remains unresolved.

(57)

305 F ° hm ° (2.0) ° 他好像 ° (1.0) >學校應該都沒什麼<問題吧? (2.0)

306 <15歲>就交 ° 女朋友 ° (2.0)

307 → ° it's amazing °

308 K 不會呀↑這不是很好嗎?

309 F ° 為什麼? °

310 K 反正他開心最重要了

311 (2.0)

312 F 你呢?你↑15歲>有沒有<女朋友?

313 K >沒有<!(2.0) ㄟ也- ㄣ

314 → F ↳Pardon?⌋ (2.0) that's the end of the

315 subject then.(° H) @@

316 K 對!但是我-15歲的時候應該也算蠻開心的吧

(Ken 40 British & Fanny 50)

305 F: 【 ° hm ° (2.0) ° he seems -(1.0) >should not have problems< at school. (2.0)

306 <At the age of 15> (he) already has ° a girlfriend ° .

307 → ° it's amazing °

308 K: No! Isn't this great?

309 F: ° Why? °

310 K: Anyway the most important thing is he is happy.

311 (2.0)

312 F: How about you? ↑ > Did you have < a girlfriend when you were 15



313 K: > No! < (2.0) ¶also- ʔ  
 314 → F: ↳Pardon?ʔ (2.0) that's the end of the  
 315 subject then.(° H) @@  
 316 Yes, but I was kind of happy when I was 15 years old】

Another type of CS is when bilingual speakers switch the language to highlight the emotion as Fanny does in extract (57) above. In this example, the two switches to a different code are both from Fanny's utterances in the discussion of their teenage son's relationship. The motivation for her switch *it's amazing* (line 307) is primarily based on the negative affective stance against the fact that their son *already has a girlfriend at the age 15*. Ken immediately contradicts her statement by uttering the negative marker *no* followed by a negative tag question which can serve to mitigate the epistemic strength of disagreement (Keisanen, 2007). His reason *Anyway the most important thing is he is happy* is provided after Fanny's wh-interrogation for clarification. After two seconds' silence, Fanny decides to change the focus to her husband, since her attempt to seek support fails. There is an overlap followed by Ken's prompt denial where the second CS occurs. Fanny's switch to English serves the function of showing her surprise and doubtful proposition which is embedded in laughing. This excerpt demonstrates how bilingual couples draw on the most readily available tool, code-switching, to highlight their emotional propositions.

Table 5-2 Fanny's stance and CS

Speaker	stance1	stance2
Fanny	So how do you deal with this er- this	
(56)	arrogant person and then	他認為他自己大概最棒了，最聰明了

---

	(epistemic) English	(epistemic) Chinese
(57)	15歲就交女朋友	it's amazing
	(epistemic) Chinese	(affective) English

In Table 5-2, the intra-turn CS and stance changes of Fanny's utterances are summarised to demonstrate how a multilingual speaker employs different language codes as a communicative cue in interaction. There is no linear relation between a certain code and a particular stancetaking. Fanny uses both English and Chinese in her epistemic stances for neutral description (56), and English for affective stance (57). It happens to coincide with her code-switching when her stance alters in the second example. She tends to prefer her first language, Chinese, to reinforce the strength of epistemic stances. In extract (56), Fanny's second part of the turn expresses her negative attitude towards her colleague being arrogant, and she switches to her mother tongue; whereas she chooses English to show her surprise on account of her son having a girlfriend at age fifteen in the later example. CS can be used to add a layer to the contrast of both languages and stances, and therefore it makes the negative attitude salient (William, 2005; Smith-Christmas, 2013).

The third example of a couple demonstrating affective stancetaking is taken from Tony and Maria's conversation in excerpts 58 and 59, recorded when they were having dinner. It is interesting to note that Tony stays with one language in the conversations even though he is fluent in both English and Chinese. All the CS occurring below is taken from Maria. In extract (58), the topic concerns why some people would accept a job offer in a different city. Tony holds the negative position against relocating to Liverpool whereas Maria's attitude is neutral.

(58)

552 T 我除了去利物浦,沒有其他機會嗎?我難道不能

【I except go to Liverpool, don't I have other chances? Why can't I】

553 留在倫敦嗎? 「我」一定要得到利物浦去嗎?

【stay in London? Do I have to go to Liverpool?】

554 M 「yeah」

555 → oh, precisely 而且他們都是-但他們都是<在職中>

【And they all are-but they're all employed .】

556 → 好不好? (2.0) they don't <need> this job!

【alright?】

557 T 除非婚姻要破碎了,或者他想要甩掉現在這個女朋友

【Unless the marriage is not working, or he wants to dump his current girlfriend.】

558 M @@next@@@

559 T 怎樣?

【What?】

560 M <Next TIME> when you want to relocate, Tony

561 T 不然咧?不然他們為什麼要這個樣子?

【Otherwise what? Why do they do this?】

562 M I'm gonna QUESTION you- the-way-you're motivated(5.0)

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

In the first turn (58), Tony utters three questions consecutively to show his strong attitude against relocating to Liverpool. By using the first person pronoun as the condition for “if I were they”, he attempts to put himself in their situation to express his proposition more convincingly. Maria’s utterance prefaced by the cluster of agreeing tokens *yeah*, *oh*, *precisely* in English is used to indicate her alignment is

partial. It supports William's findings (2005) that CS in conjunction with repetition can serve the function of highlighting the affective intensity. Her answer for the question "*why can't I stay in London*" is positive. It is similar with the usage of *yes but* and can be seen in her following repair sentence *And they all are- but they're all employed*. Firstly she uses the conjunction *and*, and then she repairs the word with the contrasting marker *but* to indicate her upcoming opposition. At line 555, she code-switches to Chinese to support and strengthen her proposition. The part that she agrees with is that those people who consider relocating for a new job do not necessarily have to do so. It is rather an opportunity for them to take. She further adds more information on the fact that they are currently employed to support such opinion. Then another CS occurs followed by a two-second pause at line 556. Maria switches to English and stresses the verb "need" to reiterate the reasoning. The change of Maria's stance corresponds to her code switches. When she agrees with Tony, she uses English and when she disagrees, she chooses Chinese in the alignment. Tony employs an indirect strategy to mitigate the disagreement by providing an extreme example for separation. He uses an imaginary scene as a metaphor to exaggerate the situation, which is a humorous performance (Attardo, 2001). Such softening is successful given Maria's laugh is observed in her following turn. She answers in English and applies the account to themselves to tease her husband's motivation for relocating. Ironic activities are carried out with teasing which playfully creates a high level of intimacy (Kotthoff, 2007). Instead of responding to her question directly, he continues discussing others' incentive. This episode shows Maria's code-switching pattern when she uses two languages to emphasise the stance in the disagreement. Her CS overtly highlights her affective stance, both positive and negative ones.

(59)

- 255 T 下次碰到她就跟她講>喔我們去了Leeds,但是沒有去你那  
256 邊<(HEHEHE)(1.5)這樣「好嗎?」  
257 M 「你>一定<」要跟人家說我們去Leeds嗎?  
258 T 所>以我們如果<不去的話,就乾脆不要去Leeds啦,  
259 我們去(..)別的地方玩啊(1.0)  
260 → M Right (1.0)  
261 T 「因為她」  
262 M 「I THINK」 you think too much, Tony! (20.0)

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

- 255 T: 【Next time when we see her, let's tell her> oh, we went to Leeds, but didn't visit you. <  
256 (HEHEHE). )(1.5) Does this 「sound nice? 」  
257 M: 「Do you >have to<」 tell her that we've been to Leeds?  
258 T: S>o if we are < not going to visit her, why not give up on Leeds?  
259 Let's go to (..) other places. (1.0)  
260 → M: Right (1.0)  
261 T: 「Because she」  
262 M: 「I THINK」 you think too much, Tony! (20.0) 】

The second extract of Tony and Maria's conversations regarding their travel plan is shown in excerpt (59). Tony suggests paying a visit to a friend when they go to Leeds and Maria rejects the proposal, because she does not get along with that friend. Their discussion in the first three turns remains in Chinese. The first CS is observed in Maria's use of *Right* in English at line 260 in response to Tony's suggestion *let's go to other places*. It is worth noting that the marker *right* preceded by a one-second pause does not indicate affirmation as it usually suggests. The assumption of treating her

turn as agreeing is plausible, given that the marker can be seen as being ironic. The combination of CS and pause signals to the interlocutor that her evaluation is not all positive on account of silence being a disalignment feature (Lemak, 2012). The overlap of turns is salient, as evidenced by Maria's negative epistemic stance. She expresses her comment in a louder voice to seize the turn, which reinforces the statement and here, her language choice is English. Maria ends the negotiation through overt emotional change.

Extract 60 and 61 are taken from Andy, from South Africa and his Taiwanese wife, Pisces at their dinner table. Andy is attempting to persuade Pisces to learn how to make rice dumplings in the following episodes. The first one shows her code choice of Chinese and the second one for English in the disagreement.

(60)

605 P No no no (KNOCK) I have NO INTention=

606 =intention ɿto learnɿ

607 A ɿnow youɿ can do it ɿ for us?ɿ

608 P ɿYou guysɿ ##

(omit 609-616)

617 A Daisy said she'll come and ɿ shape you up- ɿ

618 → P ɿ>lalalala<我不ɿ要聽

619 A ɿI'm going to go to the recycling(...)and I'm ɿ

620 P ɿ>我不要我不要我不要聽我不要聽<(°h).=ɿ

【>I don't want to, I don't want to, I don't want to listen, I don't want to listen<】

(Andy 38, South African & Pisces 38)

Extract (60) begins with Andy's positive attitude towards the possibility of making the dish and the offer from their Taiwanese friend, Daisy, to teach Pisces how to prepare it. Two exchange turns are overlapping. First code-switching occurs in line 618, *lalalala* 我不要聽, where Pisces employs a strategy of blocking herself out from her husband's voice by singing loudly and refusing to listen. Her expression of using this specific phonation *la* is not directed to the addressee, but more like a sign of the speaker's mental state (Ameka, 1992). She again objects to Andy's stance, not only by rejecting her husband's proposal in negated form, but also refusing to align as a recipient, instead of showing her opposition. Pisces speeds up and switches to her first language, and presumably Andy can understand her negative utterance in Chinese. The code choice can be seen as a strategy to strengthen her adverse stance and negative attitude. At the same time, Andy is planning ahead for where to attain the leaves while Pisces repeats her rejection. The combination of repetition and CS flags her disagreement and highlights the affective stance (William, 2005). They insist on their own propositions in another three overlapping turns.

(61)

634 P 我會做貢丸>已經很厲害<了(he)不要叫我做粽子!

【I can make pork meatballs is already impressive(he) Don't ask me to make rice dumplings】

635 A Yeah, but I have to do ALL the ㄅ hard work in貢丸ㄅ

636 → P ㄌlalalalalalala lalalaㄌ N↑o!@

637 A <yeah>↑(2.0) I <boil the water, ㄅand then>ㄅ help

638 P ㄌya but all youㄌ =

639 =have to is to <HOLD> the # meter

In extract 61, the same discussion continues and Pisces supports herself in Chinese

with the mention of another traditional dish she can make in hope of changing Andy's mind. Andy's reply prefaced by a cluster of an agreeing token "yeah" and "but" actually contradicts her statement and his language code is English. The co-occurrence of *yes*, *but* oftentimes severs the function of mitigating disagreements (Furko, 2005). He partially aligns with her about the making of meatballs, but under the condition of his assistance. The husband still attempts to convince his wife to learn the new dish. Again, Pisces employs the same strategy of singing and CS to express her attitude (line 636). The difference is she uses the strong negative word *No* in English with a rising contour to highlight the stance. There is a noticeable laugh after the CS which indicates a funny expression is established. In her following turn, Pisces provides more details on the relevant facts and clarifies what Andy actually does. She chooses English for expressing the neutral stance. Andy contradicts her with *yeah* in the next turn. He persists with the discord about the procedure of meatball making on account of his contribution. Pisces aligns with the part that he does help, but argues that his assistance is minor. The focus of the topic then shifts to who actually does the main job in making the pork meatballs. Two code-switchings can be used to align with the same affective stance to strengthen her opposition as Pisces's pattern shows in the table below. Both English and Chinese serve the same function in this case.

Table 5-3 Pisces' stance and CS

Speaker	stance1	stance2
Pisces	No no no! I have no intention to learn	Lalalala 我不要聽
(60)	(affective) English	(affective) Chinese
(61)	不要叫我做粽子	lalalalalalala lalala No!



Extract 62 below will demonstrate one more examples of code-switching and affective stances from both parties in their negotiation of oppositional propositions. The topic is about which restaurant they are going to choose to celebrate their son's birthday. Gina's first turn is in response to her question regarding where their son prefers to go, and her husband, Steven is attempting to stop her from manipulating their son's choice. The child expressed his opinion earlier (not included here), but Gina seems to dislike the restaurant he chose. It can be observed when she uses an exclamation token *aiya*, along with the adverb 又 (*again*) in line 451. The utterance signals to the recipients that it is a complaint. There is a three-second silence after her dissatisfactory stance. Steven challenges her by asking 妳幹嘛 (*what are you doing*) in the following turn. Then their son senses there is a potential disagreement between his parents and intervenes by compromising immediately. Unfortunately, the son's intervention does not impact on the ongoing discord as Steven continues his critical attitude on account of the clarification of whose birthday it actually is. The CS occurs at very end when Steven articulates his epistemic stance *Not your birthday* and in Gina's response *not my birthday*. By repeating the other interlocutor's prior turn with irony, it functions to challenge, rather than Coates' suggestion that repetition by a different speaker signals an increasingly playful mode (2007). The lexical CS to English is marked to highlight the special meaning of a certain word. Gina argues that she is the one who gave birth to him so the birthday is her contribution. Steven contradicts her statement with the question *so?* in which he code-switches to English to stress his challenge in oppositional stance. The discourse marker also suggests Gina's claim is not a valid reason for manipulating their son's decision, which is in line with Muntigl and Turnbull's irrelevancy claim where *so* indicates the previous

claim is not relevant to the discussion at hand (1998).

(62)

451 G 唉呀 又要Nandos, AH

452 (3.0)

453 S 妳幹嘛?

454 K 好!隨便

455 → S 又不是妳的birthday

456 → G Oh-不是我的birthday噯?

457 S 算「什麼」東西

458 → G 「可是」我生他啊我給他birth啊

459 → S So?

(Steven 48, British & Gina 47; K=kid)

451 G: 【Aiya, Nandos again, AH

452 (3.0)

453 S: What are you doing?

454 K: Fine, whatever

455 → S: Not your birthday

456 → G: Oh-not my birthday yo?

457 S: What 「do」 you care?

458 → G: 「But」 I gave him birth. I gave birth to him.

459 → S: So? 】【

The extracts from 54 to 62 have demonstrated how multilingual couples deploy CS to highlight their positive/negative stances in terms of attitude, feeling, and mood in disagreement discourse. Participants use different language codes to either align or

disalign with their interlocutor's proposition. Multilingual speakers have the capacity for combining other communicative cues, such as the contour change, the quality of voice, pause, discourse markers, *etc.* along with code-switching to intensify the salience of an utterance (Gardner-Chloros *et al.*, 2000). The contrasting nature of CS can serve the function of contextualising the significance of their affective stance as the eleven excerpts above have shown. In next section, the focus will be centred on code-switching in accordance with diverse epistemic stance-taking in disagreement.

## 5.4 CS and Epistemic Stance-taking

Epistemic stance refers to knowledge or belief, including degrees of certainty of knowledge, degrees of commitment to truth of propositions, and sources of knowledge (Ochs, 1996). 9 episodes of epistemic stances and code-switching are selected for the analysis. Extract 63 is drawn from a conversation in the car when the couple are on their way to another city. Eirik, the Norwegian husband and his Taiwanese wife, Sally disagree on whether the audio recorder is working properly.

(63)

- |       |   |                                    |
|-------|---|------------------------------------|
| 001   | E | wieder aufnehmen                   |
| 002   | S | Ich habe (ihn) wieder angeschaltet |
| 003 → | E | 這裡關掉                               |
| 004   | S | <現在打開了啦>                           |
| 005   | E | <沒有>↑(..)沒有亮啊(3.0)可以關              |
| 006 → |   | Hast'e gehalten?                   |
| 007   | S | Ich verstehe dich nicht;           |
| 008   |   | was du meinst                      |

009 → E 妳沒有錄起來(7.0)你沒有錄起來嗎?

010 S 。沒有。

011 E 為什麼沒有錄起來?

012 S 。不知道。喔你看那個-飛機飛那麼低

(Eirik 59, Norwegian& Sally 50)

001 E: 【record again

002 S: I have switched it on again

003 → E: Here it's off

004 S: <Now it's on>

005 E: <No,>↑(..) the light is not on. (3.0) (It) might be switched off.

006 → Have you stopped?

007 S: I don't understand you

008 What (do) you mean?

009 → E: You didn't record it. (7.0) Didn't you record it?

010 S: 。No。

011 E: Why didn't you record it?

012 S: 。I don't know. 。Oh, you look the plane flying so low】

In this episode, Eirik initiates his turn in German concerning the recording function of the device, and three pairs of CS can be observed. Sally's subsequent turn is clearly an alignment both in the content and the language choice. The first code-switching occurs at line 003, when Eirik uses Chinese to take an evaluative epistemic stance towards the signal displaying on the device to express his doubt. Sally aligns with the code, but disagrees with the content by clarifying that she is certain, because she has switched it on. Eirik's contradiction appears in the response prefaced by a negative token, and he points out that the indicator of the device is not flashing. He takes an

overtly negative stance through the deployment of the second CS in German, where he questions Sally if she has pushed the stop button on the recorder. Sally's next turn again coincides in the language choice and reifies her uncertainty and confusion. Apparently, She fails to understand either why Eirik puts the blame on her, or the signal he mentions in the previous utterance. Eirik acknowledges the communication breakdown, and draws a conclusion that their conversation has not been recorded. Here he switches for the third time, and his choice for the certain stance is Chinese. The code-switching enforces the power of the condemnation. It is interesting to note that the husband repeats the question in two languages, his L3 and L4, and the recurrent repetition indicates the speaker is getting impatient (Bani-Shoraka, 2005).

A lengthy silence which is preceded by CS denotes that the other interlocutor is displeased. Silences can be a sign of misinterpretation, can indicate agreement or disagreement, or convey emotion and sincerity (Lemak, 2012, p. 59). Eirik reiterates his proposition in the form of a question, to soften his condemnation. In response, Sally's next turn changes her stance, and admits her fault in a low volume. The mild voice appears again at her last utterance, when she replies to Eirik's interrogation. She shifts the topic, by directing her husband's attention to the airplane, to end the discussion. Interestingly enough, the fact is that their conversation has been successfully recorded. Compared to other couples' CS, Eirik and Sally show a very tidy language pattern in their talk. It is always the husband who chooses the code, and the wife cooperates with him in this episode. Both participants comfortably switch between German and Chinese for their epistemic stances, in terms of their knowledge and certainty/uncertainty towards the recording. Eirik shows no preference in any of the codes for his expression, given that none of them is his first language, whereas Sally's emotional force seems stronger when she speaks in her L1, such as in line 4

and line 10. Eirik declares that Sally is responsible for not having their voices recorded. He questions her continuously both in turn 09 and 11. Sally appears to feel guilty, but attempts to save face, so she switches the topic to something completely different. Based on Eirik's response, it is a successful distractive strategy.

The focus of extract 64 is another language pattern with Tony and Maria present, drawing particular attention to how Maria code-switches in the same turn to strengthen her proposition. The husband uses one code (Chinese) and the wife uses a different code (English) to respond at all times in this conversation.

(64)

281 T 沒有錯啊!它離Cardiff很近哪!過個河就到啦(2.0)

【That's right! It is close to Cardiff! Just across the river. 】

282 (COUGH)(1.0)

283 → M I think it takes <At lea↑st> AN HOUR on the coach.

284 T 不會耶!妳知道嗎?它跟Cardiff的<距離>(6.0)

【No! Do you know the distance between this and Cardiff】

285 比London到St Albans還要近

【is closer than the distance from Lodnon to St Albans】

286 M That's <SO not> true!(1.0)

287 T 妳去量嘛!而且到這邊是過河啊(1.5)那應該有那種船直接就坐過去了

【You go and measure! And to here it's crossing the river. (1.5) There should be boats directly going there】

288 M Hm hm? really? ↑

289 T 對呀(COUGH)(4.0)

【Yeah】

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

In this example, the couple are in the process of deciding the route for their trip. Tony suggests adding Cardiff to their plan, but Maria is reluctant considering the distance they have to travel. Tony introduces the proposition in his first turn, where he claims that the two cities are not far from each other, if they were to take the water route. Maria's response is a neutral stance, in which she chooses English as her code to express her knowledge of how long it will take through another mode of transport. Tony immediately disagrees on the distance in Chinese, and provides a comparison of the distance between London and St Albans to convince his wife. The change of her voice quality at line 286 strengthens Maria's negative stance and the disalignment. According to Norrick and Spitz (2008), a loud voice can be seen as the simplest form of counter-claim in disagreement. It signifies that she does not believe Tony's previous claim about the distance between London and St Albans being greater. In order to prove his proposition, Tony asks Maria to measure the distance on the map and reiterates his opinion in favour of taking the direct water route. This instruction results in Maria's transition of stance: from certain to uncertain. She makes an evaluation and re-positions her stance by uttering an exclamation of doubt *really* with a rising pitch. At the end, she accepts the proposal for the new route. The pattern of aligning or disaligning with their partners' language code is fluid and context dependent as a strategy for different stance-taking.

Extract 65 and 66 present Steven's epistemic stancetaking and code-switching in the discussions below. The first one is drawn from a dinner time conversation between Gina and Steven, with the focus on Steven's CS at lines 267, 269, and 271. Steven disagrees with Gina when she claims there are lots of vegetables on the table. Gina's

proposition is supported by the healthy balance of nutrients, whereas Steven is concerned more about the taste. Steven overtly states *hm hunh but you don't necessarily need three flavours* to stress his opinion which is a partial agreement in his first code-switching. The backchannel along with the discourse marker *but* ratifies and builds on background information in the preceding utterance, and also returns the attention to the speaker's main stance, or contrasts the interlocutor's statement (Norrick, 2001). His argument is based on the possibility of mixing the three kinds of vegetables in one dish, yet the suggestion is not accepted by Gina, as Gina's following turn insists on her personal preference of vegetables. The second CS occurs when Steven utters a question *what* in English for clarification (line 269). In response, Gina's repetition of the same affective stance is used to make her proposition more explicit. Then Steven switches back to Chinese 我知道 (*I know*), to mark his epistemic stance by acknowledging her statement (line 271). The last utterance also signals to Gina that "I know what you mean but it is irrelevant".

(65)

264 G 沒有啊,你要balance啊

【No, you need to balance.】

265 S ya

266 G You need balance. Meat and veggie.

267 → S hmhunh (1.5)但是妳不一定要(.)三種味道

【but you don't necessarily need three flavours.】

268 G <I like VEGgie>

269 → S What?

270 G I like veggies

271 → S 。我知道。(2.0)



【I know】

(Steven 48, British & Gina 47)

(66)

903           G   One minute!

904           S   Hm?

905           G   Is that-

906   →     S   怎麼了?

【What's the matter?】

907           G   Japanese or what? Is it UN hm?

908   →     S   Yes, he is UN

909           G   Is he Japanese?

910           S   No, he is Korean

911           G   Is he?

912           S   BAN KI <MOON>, of course he is Korean

This episode (66) begins with Gina's request about which nationality the person in the news report belongs to. Gina and Steven speak English throughout the conversation, except for one turn in Chinese. She believes the person is Japanese, but would like reassurance for her assumption. She utters a yes/no question at lines 905 and 907. Four of Gina's turns are in the form of interrogation throughout their discussion. She uses English only for her uncertain proposition. The CS occurs at line 906, when Steven shifts to Chinese to show his concern. The degree of Steven's commitment to her question is strengthened along with the switch. In his following turn, he chooses to reply to Gina's second question in Chinese, regarding the person's name, and confirms her estimate. The disagreement does not commence until Gina's next turn, where she shifts back to the issue of nationality (line 909). Steven gives a negative

answer to Gina in the sequential utterance, and clarifies that the person is Korean. His answer does not convince Gina, as she uses a tag question to express her doubt. Remarkably, Gina uses three yes/no questions continually (lines 907, 909, 911). By reformulating these questions as a repetition, the speaker shows her assertion, rather than seeking for information (Heinemann, 2008). It explains why Steven replies in a loud voice, and elongated word to express his frustration and impatience. Steven reiterates his proposition, and concludes that the person in question is definitely Korean. Gina remains doubtful at the end of the discussion. The CS pattern of Steven can be observed in this episode, in which the participant uses his wife's L1 to stress his emotional force for the concern, and his own L1 for expression of certainty. Table 5-4 shows a summary of Steven's CS along with his epistemic stance-taking. When his stance changes from a negative one to affirmative or doubt, he tends to switch to a different language. However, the different stances he uses are revealed both in English and Chinese, and show no preference over which code for which stance.

*Table 5-4 Steven's epistemic stance and CS*

Speaker	Stance1	Stance2	Stance 3
Steven	但是妳不一定要三種味道	What	我知道
(65)	(epistemic) Chinese	(epistemic) English	(epistemic) Chinese
(66)	怎麼了	Yes, he is UN	
	(affective) Chinese	(epistemic) English	

Structurally speaking, extract 67 is similar to the previous excerpt. There is only one CS, and it is the non-native speaker who switches the code to Chinese (line 270). The disagreement commences during dinner time, when Fanny mistakes Belford College as Belford modern and Ken corrects her. Unlike the episode above, where Chinese is

used in an interrogation, here Ken deploys code-switching in double negation to clarify his stance. He aligns with Fanny both in the content, and the language choice in his prior turns. However, when it comes to disagreement, he code-switches to Chinese to emphasise the difference. The oppositional peak is established by the switch, given that CS contributes to adding an extra layer of contrast between participants during the disagreement exchanges (Cromdal, 2004, p.47). His motivation of CS is arguably based on the account of facilitating his wife to understand the difference among the schools in her first language.

(67)

- 262 F So (..) Belford college (..) is the one! Steve's er..
- 263 Steve's as the- err(.) cricket training
- 264 K Hm(.) ㄟyeahㄟ
- 265 F ㄟThat's ㄟ a different college. And that's Belford school,
- 266 which is a private school. The↑other one is what? Belford?
- 267 K Modern
- 268 F What- where is Belford Modern? There's a Belford College,
- 269 Belford College means Belford Modern
- 270 → K 沒有沒有!三個都不一樣的
- 【No no, all three are different】
- 271 F (° H)

(Ken 40 British & Fanny 50)

In excerpt (68), French-Taiwanese couple, Fabrice and Kate, are discussing the factors that might contribute to their baby's intelligence. They use English as a lingua franca, because none of them is capable of speaking each other's first language. Fabrice has

just moved to Taiwan for a year, and begun taking Chinese lessons; thus his knowledge of Mandarin vocabulary is rather limited.

(68)

053 K uh-how to say (..) hmm(7.0).if mother is smart(.) baby

054 will (be) smart, too!

055 F yeah, but mother (is) never smart

056 K @@(..) but the(.) if - father is smart(2.0) hm, baby↑-

057 is not smart, (..) too

058 F oh

059 → K 不一定

【Not necessary】

060 → F so our baby will be- hm (2.0) stupid 笨!

【stupid】

061 K NO- NO, [not]

062 F [be] cause I am smart @@@

(Fabrice 39, French & Kate 36)

Kate introduces the discussion of a recent report about babies' intelligence, and they disagree about the influence of parents. Her proposition is based on the assumption that babies' brains have a direct connection to their mothers'. Fabrice's subsequent turn prefaced by a cluster of discourse markers *yeah, but* indicates that his upcoming utterance is not going to be all desirable. The husband counterclaims Kate's statement by uttering a sarcastic comment *mother is never smart* (line 055). When a teasing topic is introduced with laughter, recipients acknowledge the humorous potential of the topic, and expect funny responses to follow (Kotthoff, 2007). Kate's response is prefaced with a laugh, which indicates she perceives his expression as funny.

However, humour can be interpersonally aggressive, such as in teasing and sarcasm, which can be potentially hurtful in interaction (Tannen, 1984; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). His negative evaluation stance against pregnant women leads to Kate's contradiction, where she points out that there is no positive relationship between the fathers' intelligence and that of the babies'. The focus of this example is on Kate's code-switching at line 59 不一定 (*Not necessary*), where she switches to her mother tongue to reiterate her stance. Arguably, her CS might be due to her difficulty in getting her point across in English, rather than being a strategic choice. As far as Kate is concerned, she is able to express her proposition and knowledge in full by switching to Chinese. It seems her emphasis fails to convince her husband, given that Fabrice's response shows his proposition remains the opposite, as he utters *so our baby will be- hm stupid* 笨. Another lexical CS can be observed when he repeats stupid in another code to highlight his conclusion. Kate switches to English *No, no, not* to contradict his stance, yet her utterance is interrupted by Fabrice. Fabrice gains the floor, and supports his opinion by a self-serving strategy, when he claims *because I am smart*, while also teasing her indirectly for not being intelligent. This excerpt constitutes the use of playful teasing, laughter, and code-switching which demonstrates that the disagreement actually does not damage the intimacy.

(69/45)

378 C 那邊<是你婆-熟悉的環境(.)可是<對我而言>(.)你的家人是都

【There it's your mum-familiar environment. But to me, your family are all】

379 → all strangers>你知道我意思<嗎?

【Do you know what I mean?】

380 → A °they are not all strangers ㄟyou met themㄟ°

381→ C ㄟI didn't ㄟ familiar with them ah

382           A   °you met them a COUPLE of TIMES°  
 383           C   I KNOW(.) couple <time>. But we didn't live together or-  
 384                just-(2.0)  
 385           A   No(...) (tsk) (1.5)  
 386           C   you know what I mean↓?  
 387 →       A   我->可台灣人都會這樣<做(1.0)不是嗎?

【I but-Taiwanese people would all do this, don't they? 】

The excerpts 69 and 70 are taken from a discussion of between Chin and Ali about relocating to the U.S.A. Code-switching occurs in both speakers' utterances. In these two excerpts, Chin opts for the epistemic stance term *I know* in English. Let us examine Chin's first CS at line 379, where she switches to English for *all strangers*. Arguably, she could choose a different language code to mitigate the emotional weight of the word, or on the contrary to strengthen its force. As Dewaele (2010) suggests, the strong emotional arousal may affect "the position on the language mode continuum" and hence, it may change the speaker's habitual language choices (p. 187). Her sequential placement of *Do you know what I mean* attempts to reassure Ali about the validity of the proposition put forward, and secondly, to express her uncertainty regarding Ali's attitude. In this sense, the DM can be seen as a softener for her prior turn, addressing Ali's family as strangers. Chin's second CS is an alignment with Ali's language choice, as Chin replies in English (line 380). She stays in the same code for the rest of her turns to express her negative proposition of unfamiliarity. Chin's utterance *you know what I mean* (line 386) is assuring Ali that he is not being underestimated, but credited with knowledge of the facts which are now only recalled and reiterated.

On the other hand, Ali's CS reveals a different pattern. First, in his first turn in response to Chin's tag question, Ali switches to his L1 English to disagree with Chin. The central point is the second CS in Ali's epistemic stance-taking, where he refers to most of Taiwanese people's attitude 可台灣人都會這樣做 (line 387) to support his claim. By doing so, Chin is oriented to her own tradition, which seems to contradict her prior proposition. Additionally, switching to Chinese highlights Ali's proposition. Different languages may have different affective meanings, depending on the interlocutors and situations (Pavlenko, 2005). It is interesting to note that the discourse marker *you know what I mean* and its Chinese counterpart 你知道我意思嗎 both occur in the same episode. When Chin utters the sentence in Chinese, Ali responds in English, whereas when she uses the same DM in English, he answers her in Chinese.

(70)

- 802 C 我想說-其實我>有一點掙扎的是說<我們<會不會>一下去美國  
803 (.)然後(1.0)錢用完了,一下-很快花光,我們就要回台灣對不對?  
804 (..)所以我想說不用帶那麼多東西去  
805 (1.5)(SNIFF)  
806 A 我們不會這麼快回台灣  
807 → C I know, but at least half a year 啊(.) half a year也很短啊  
808 → A <No>,我們只在-er是。現在不要討論這個。

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

- 802 C: 【I was thinking-actually I >am struggling with that < whether once we go to America,  
803 (.) and then (1.0) run out of money, very soon, we will come back to Taiwan, right?  
804 (..) So, I was thinking we don't need to bring so much stuff.  
805 (1.5) (SNIFF)  
806 A: We are not coming back to Taiwan so soon.

807 → C: I know, but at least half a year ah,(.) half a year is also quite short.

808 → A: <No>. we just-er are. Don't talk about this right now. 】

In extract 70, Chin's stand point is that she expects the length of stay in the United States to be temporary. On the contrary, Ali disapproves of her statement by asserting that *we are not coming back to Taiwan so soon*. Her switch to English at line 807 serves the function of signalling to the other interlocutor that the upcoming utterance may be a disagreement, and also enforces her proposition. In this case, L1 is not the language Chin opts for the purposes of a strong expression, as Pavlenko points out that speakers may employ different languages to index a variety of affective stances (2005). It seems the couple have agreed on six months' length prior to the discussion. Chin addresses the length of time twice in her turn and code-switches to Chinese at the end for the epistemic stance of *half a year is very short*. The discussion is interrupted because the topic is censored by Ali, who decides that it is inappropriate to be recorded. Moreover, he tends to use negation in English instinctively, and uses Chinese in certainty stances as Table 5-5 shows. Ali's different stances display a switch pattern in association with the change of two codes.

Table 5-5 Ali's epistemic stance and CS

Speaker	Stance1	Stance2
Ali	they are not all strangers, you met th'm	我-可台灣人都會這樣做,不是嗎
(69)	(epistemic) English	(epistemic) Chinese
(70)	我們不會這麼快回台灣	No,我們只在-er是,現在不要討論這個
	(epistemic) Chinese	(affective) English + Chinese

The focus of the last excerpt (71) is the opposing propositions put forward by Henry



and Ayi, in the conversation with their female friend. The topic is introduced by Ayi in *Papa, boys, her son let others touch his willy*, where she interprets the occasion as serious sexual harassment. She addresses Henry as a father, and invites him to respond to the question from a male perspective. Ayi's strategy of seeking her husband's approval turns out to be the consequence of discouragement against herself, given that Henry takes a far more relaxed stance, and suggests that the action is normal among boys. He code-switches to his L1 Hokkien at line 144 to reiterate his statement, even though his wife is not fluent in Hokkien. Henry's unmoved opposition is highlighted by the CS. When a topic is related to more personal issues, participants may prefer certain languages that the interlocutors do not understand, and it does not seem to matter (Dewaele, 2004; 2010). Their friend aligns with the statement and Henry's explanation is treated as support for her ascription of the incident to young boys' curiosity. Then Henry gains the floor to adduce more evidence, which invites Ayi's challenge. She rejoins the discussion following Henry's turn where he mentions the reaction of their friend's son after he was caught. Ayi discords on a minor point *he was not caught by his mother, but by everyone*, which does not receive any acknowledgement from Henry. Henry shifts the focus on "he is a kid", to indicate that his proposition remains there is nothing to worry about.

(71)

139        A    啊對呀爸爸 ↑ 男生哪(.)她兒子給人家摸小鳥(.)怎麼這樣啊?

140        H    ㄟ那本來就是這樣啊-ㄟ

141        F    ㄣ那是一個階段對不對ㄣ ? 好奇嘛

142        H    heya

143        F    好奇它怎麼會

144 →    H    <還好>,啊物-啊物自己的按呢攞會玩(..)無要緊啊! hey ↓

- 145 F 因為我的想法也是好奇，「因為他會覺得本來是」  
 146 H 「他可能是因為媽媽知道」  
 147 A 不是!他不是被我-他不是被他媽媽抓到,是我們大家  
 148 H <唉唷(..)小朋友嘛>

(Henry 37, Filipino & Ayi 37; F=friend)

- 139 A: 【ah yes, Papa! ↑ Boys(.) Her son let others touch his willy (.) How come?  
 140 H: 「That's how it should be-」  
 141 F: 「That's temporary, right? ↓」 curious  
 142 H: heya  
 143 F: curious about how it  
 144 → H: (That's)< fine>. Ah (they ) play with themselves, doesn't matter. hey ↓  
 145 F: Because I was thinking he's just curious. 「Because he thinks it was」  
 146 H: 「He probably knows that his mum found out-」  
 147 A: No! He wasn't (caught) by me- he was not caught by his mother, either, but by everyone.  
 148 H: <aiyo,(..) little kids> 』

In Section 5.3 and 5.4, I have demonstrated how epistemic stances and affective stances are associated with code-switching in multilingual couples' disagreement. There are also episodes where individuals use clusters of stances to achieve their interactional goals as the following section will investigate.

## 5.5 CS and Mixed Stance-taking

CS can serve as a structural strategy that is employed in the process of stance-taking (Bassiouny, 2012). Extracts 72 to 74 are selected from two couples' conversations: a mix of stances between Tony and Maria, and Paola and Bjorn will be analysed below:

(72)

- 735 → M Tony! 這就是飯, okay ↑ ?
- 736 T 但它能夠變成這種正方形的對不對? 「基本上」
- 737 M 「我認為它」:就是
- 738 拿那種-有沒有?製冰的. 「有各種形狀的」
- 739 T 「沒有它」 飯黏不起來
- 740 → M THAT'S SO NOT TRUE! 飯當然黏得起來啊

( Maria 38, Italian& Tony 36)

- 735 → M: 【Tony! This is exactly rice, okay ↑ ?
- 736 T: But it can turn into this square shape, right? 「Basically」
- 737 M: 「I think it:」 was
- 738 that-you know? ice mould, 「all kinds of shapes」
- 739 T: 「No, it-」 rice cannot be stuck together
- 740 → M: THAT'S SO NOT TRUE!OF COURSE RICE CAN BE STUCK TOGETHER. 】

In extract (72), there is no communicatively significant discrepancy between Tony and Maria in their discussion about ingredients in a particular recipe. The episode begins with Maria attempting to capture her husband's attention, and seizing the turn by addressing his first name in English. She then switches to Chinese to assert her statement, followed by an English closing marker *okay*. The contrast between the two languages of her utterance highlights the claim she is making and her stance-taking. In this discourse-related type of switching, CS contextualises some aspects of the conversation, and the main function of switching is to achieve a contrast with the language used before the code change (Milroy, 2003; Giacalone-Ramat, 1995). In response, Tony reifies that the square shape indicates the ingredient is not rice to object to her claim. The final part of his utterance is overlapped with Maria's

sequential turn, in which she relates the shape to the ice mould. Another overlap occurs when Tony disagrees with her assumption by saying rice is not sticky enough to be shaped. At line 740, Maria code-switches to English *That is so not true* as a counterclaim to express her certainty of knowledge. The CS along with a loud volume is overtly marking her strong disagreement. Her last part of the turn is back to Chinese in describing the fact that rice is sticky enough to be shaped. How Maria's stance change coincides with her code-switching can be seen in the table below:

Table 5-6 Maria's mixed stances and CS

Speaker	Stance1	Stance2	Stance3
Maria	oh, precisely	而且他們都是-但他們都是在	they don't need this job
(58)		職中,好不好?	
	(epistemic) English	(epistemic) Chinese	(epistemic) English
(59)	你一定要跟人家說我們去	Right.	I THINK you think too
	Leeds 嗎		much,Tony
	(epistemic) Chinese	(affective) English	(epistemic) English
(72)	That's so not true!	飯當然黏得起來啊	
	(epistemic) English	(epistemic) Chinese	

Maria tends to express herself in Chinese when the utterance is related to facts or the truth. On the other hand, if the proposition involves her attitude, mood, or evaluation in particular, she tends to choose English. She uses English to express both agreement and disagreement, yet she prefers to elaborate her reasoning in Chinese. The examples reveal that Maria's usage of English in affective stance is overtly marked. It corresponds rather closely to Smith-Christmas' conclusion that speakers index alignment by semantic content, and reify stances through structural linguistic

components within their own turns in conversation (2013).

The following examples are taken from Bjorn and Paola's disagreements with the focus on Paola in the first episode and a different central point for Bjorn in the second episode. In extract (73), they are having a discussion about the possibility of having an affair. Upon the statement that Bjorn is going to find a young girl, Paola produces a loud laughing sound, to treat his claim with ridicule, and poses a threat to him. As her response is deemed a challenge to Bjorn, he immediately defends himself by uttering a prosodically marked expression, *oh* with a rising contour, as an opposing preface. This discourse marker signals the topic change, and *oh* conveys additional information about the speaker's evaluation of the constructed conversation, and thus positions his or her stance (Trester, 2009). The three constant questions can be seen as his expanded opposition in the following part of the turn. There is a noticeable one and half second pause at line 078, followed by a sigh, which suggests that Bjorn is evaluating his stance. He concludes with a claim that Paola will not be able to know even if he has an affair. Paola aligns with his evaluative stance, and offers clarification that the assumption will be valid under certain conditions.

(73)

- 075           B    我要-找別人啦.來找妹妹啊
- 076           P    (HAHAhunh)!你~~不~~想活啦?>你就來吧<@
- 077           B    oh?(1.0)我那麼笨喔? 幹嘛我找>還要給妳找到喔<?還要給妳
- 078                    看到喔?(1.5) (SIGH)!(..)我找的時候,妳也不見得會知道啊?
- 079 →       P    Hm除非我睡著的時候,不然>平常的話<無可能的代誌
- 080           B    那就對了啊
- 081           P    啊- ㄣ你的ㄣ意思是<oh>↑

- 082           B           └本來┐                   你┐可能er可能┑
- 083           P                                   └你的意思-┐ 你跑出去,等我睡著的時候
- (Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)
- 075           B: 【I want to- find someone else. go find a young girl.
- 076           P: (HAHAhuh) Do you WANT TO DIE? >You can try<@
- 077           B: oh? (1.0) Am I that stupid? Why if I find someone,> would I let you find out? < have to
- 078                   let you see it? (1.5) (SIGH)Even if I try, you won't necessarily know.
- 079   →   P: Hm, unless it is when I fall in sleep. Otherwise, > at the usual time< that's impossible!
- 080           B: That is exactly right.
- 081           P: ah- ┐you're ┑ trying to say that <oh>↑
- 082           B:   └ originally ┐                   You ┐perhaps, er, perhaps┑
- 083           P:                                   └ you mean- ┐ you run out after I am asleep? 】

The code-switching and Paola's change of an evaluative stance is evident at the end of her second turn (line 79). She uses the contrast adverb *otherwise* to signal the overt modification and then switches to Hokkien to emphasise her certainty. Such a contrast in language serves to highlight her oppositional stance and increases the affective intensity (Cromdal, 2004). However, her choice of switching to her husband's mother tongue does not lead to the other interlocutor's alignment. Bjorn responds to her antecedent proposition instead. There is a communication problem that Bjorn actually refers to when he says *exactly right*. It takes Paola a while to recognise what Bjorn meant by his agreeing token. She shows her acknowledgement by the change of contour. The contextual evidence suggests that Bjorn's choice to frame the argument is based on the possibility of when his wife falls asleep. Their disagreement continues for another two minutes until the participants switch off the recorder.

Let us compare the two episodes from 54 and 73, involving the same speaker, to illustrate how Paola's deployment of a similar strategy of code-switching in disagreement has the possibility of leading to different result.

*Table 5-7 Paola's mixed stances and CS*

Speaker	preface	Stance1	Stance2
Paola	Woah	好啦好啦	不要來喔
(54)		(affective)	(negative)
		Southern Min	Mandarin
(73)	Hm	除非我睡著的時候	不然平常的話, 無可能的代誌
		(epistemic)	(affective)
		Mandarin	Mandarin CS to Southern Min

Table 5-7 displays two codes Paola uses in her oppositional stances, and none of the languages are her L1. Paola chooses Mandarin for a true claim “Don't come” in the first example, and for a precondition “unless I fall asleep” in the later one. Another language, Southern Min (Hokkien) is used in her affective stances only. It is not the code related to a particular function that makes the code-switching meaningful, but rather the language juxtaposition used for communicative purposes, which creates the semantic values (Auer, 1988). When Paola's proposition switches from affirmative to negative, she also switches to a different code. She employs the CS to Hokkien to emphasise her attitude for something impossible. It seems Hokkien functions as a language with a stronger emotion than Mandarin in Paola's case.

(74)

34

B 我不夠溫柔?

- 35           P  嗯
- 36   →     B  <sup>甘</sup>有可能?
- 37           P  嗯
- 38           B  是嗎?
- 39           P  嗯，不夠溫柔
- 40           B  ey-
- 41   →     P  我是<女生耶>！我喜歡感覺像mimito一下嘛
- 42   →     B  mimito?
- 43           P  嗯(1.5)

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 34           B: 【I am not gentle enough?
- 35           P: hmm
- 36   →     B: Is it possible?
- 37           P: hmm
- 38           B: is it?
- 39           P: hm, not gentle enough
- 40           B: ey-
- 41   →     P: I am a <woman>! I like the feeling of caress
- 42   →     B: caress?
- 43           P: hmm (1.5)  】

In excerpt (74), the couple disagree on the reason for frequent quarrels, and Bjorn shows his doubt in his first turn *I am not gentle enough*. Then the CS occurs in his following turn when Bjorn switches to his mother tongue, Hokkien, <sup>甘</sup>有可能 to disalign Paola's criticism (line 36). As a contextualisation cue, CS can be used to signal irony meanings (Li & Miloy, 1995). The switch to Hokkien indicates that what



he meant is “the claim is not possible”, and the speaker is confident in that utterance. After two discord exchanges, Bjorn code switches to Mandarin in a form of tag question 是嗎 to challenge Paola. In response, Paola reiterates *not gentle* to confirm the statement, and also strengthens her oppositional stance. Paola’s affirmation is received, and Bjorn’s proposition seems to become uncertain. In her subsequent turn, she borrows a word from Spanish to express her affective proposition. Again, the switch from L2 to L1 leads Paola to become more emotional, and to recognise feelings that would not be articulated otherwise (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). The second CS serves a different function. The act that Bjorn repeats *mimito* (caress) in a rising pitch can be seen as a request for clarification or as a marker of uncertainty. It is interesting to note that all the turns from Bjorn in this episode are in the form of interrogation. I will compare Bjorn’s questioning utterance to all other similar interrogation stances in the table below:

Table 5-8 Interrogation stances and language choice

	Speaker	Stance	Language choice
(57)	Fanny	Pardon? (epistemic)	English (L2)
(62)	Steven	so? (affective)	English (L1)
(63)	Eirik	Hast'e gehaltet? (epistemic)	German (L2/3)
(66)	Steven	怎麼了? (affective)	Chinese (L2)
(69)	Ali	我可-台灣人都會這樣做,不是嗎? (epistemic)	Chinese (L2)
(72)	Maria	Tony! 這就是飯, okay? (epistemic)	Mix (L1+L2)
(74)	Bjorn	甘有可能? (epistemic)	Southern Min (L1)

Multilingual couples tend to use code-switching in interrogative propositions when

they disagree, both in affective and epistemic ones, as Table 5-8 displays. The stances are either sarcastic, doubtful, persuasive, with strong emotion, or disbelief proposition, and concurrently occur with intonation change. It can be observed that three participants opt for their L1 to express such stances, whereas five participants' language choices in questioning are their second or third languages. The contrast of language in these utterances is an exceptionally powerful cue for their interlocutors and a strategy for the speakers to highlight the stances and negotiate disagreement (Cromdal, 2004; Smith-Christmas, 2013). However, how strong the emotional force of L1, L2 or L3 is highly depends on individual perceptions.

## **5.6 Summary**

The transcriptions above have demonstrated the value of using a variety of stances as a constructive means to analyse code-switching in opposition sequences. The disagreement between multilingual couples is either escalated or mitigated through their code switches. In investigating CS in multilingual couples' disagreement, this chapter emphasises the interactional means the couples deploy in terms of affective and epistemic stances. Stance-taking in interaction is dynamic, and can function as contextualisation cues for the interlocutors to create a reference for subsequent utterances (Jaffe, 2009). Participants use intra-turn or inter-turn switches to highlight the affective or epistemic stances. Therefore, CS is indeed a systematic, skilled, and socially meaningful strategy in communication (Woolard, 2004). A general finding of this chapter is that multilingual speakers can use different languages to reiterate the same utterance enforcing the importance of their adverse stances. It is important to bear in mind that there is no certain code-switching appropriate for specific speech acts in multilingual couples' conversation, due to the complex nature of the switch.

The same code may be used for diverse purposes, by the same speaker, in one CS episode. Participants frequently use code-switching in conjunction with amending their propositions to highlight the viewpoints they make, either to mitigate or to aggravate the discord. The contrast between two languages adds an extra layer of meaning to the opposite exchanges. CS becomes one of the most readily available strategies for multilingual couples to achieve their communicative goal in negotiation. When the switch occurs along with other contextualisation cues, such as discourse markers, noticeable pause, elongated voice, raised intonation or change in tempo, it strengthens the salience of their stance-taking twice. Humour is also employed in the process of code-switching. Disagreements interacting with teasing among multilingual couples demonstrate the great familiarity between participants (Habib, 2008). The details of the contradictory propositions have been highlighted within the sequential interaction. By switching from one language to another at specific sequential construction, multilingual couples create the climax of an argumentative discourse based on the juxtaposition of the codes.

Eight couples are found to use a mixed code in the conversation, in addition to three other couples borrowing words from their mother tongue occasionally. A total of eight couples choose English to communicate, including two pairs in Taiwan. Two couples use Chinese as the main code. As for the motivation behind choosing a different language, intermarriage itself is not a decisive factor as an incentive to learn a new language. It is the language which facilitates communication in the intermarriage. Their linguistic competence is not a main criterion for multilingual couples' code choice, but self-confidence does have a role. Other factors, identities, habits, emotions (intra-personal), as well as other network, such as on account of their spouse, children, parents in law, or work (inter-personal), have been demonstrated to have influence on

the language options and choices of participants.

## **6. Chapter 6. Resolution of Disagreement**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 has examined how code switching can function as various strategies to express affective or epistemic stances in order to manage the disagreement conducted in multilingual couples' ongoing talk. In this chapter, the focus will be on the final sequence of the disagreement, which is the closing stage. How the resolution of different disagreements is reached and what strategies can be used to lead to a consensus will be analysed. Section 6.2 provides an overview of terminating disagreement, following Vuchinich's (1990) five basic formats, and examples of each type will be demonstrated in Sections 6.3 to 6.9 separately in order to understand how multilingual couples end their oppositions in detail. A total of 27 extracts are selected on the basis of the action of solving contentious issues.

### **6.2 Termination of Disagreement Overview**

Mention has already been made of the organisation of disagreement: initial stage, maintenance, and resolution. Schifffrin (1985) argues disagreement oftentimes ends without winners or losers and without resolution (p. 35). The resolution of disagreement which has been discussed in Section 2.4 is the termination stage in the previous literature. Research on the termination of a verbal disagreement is generally classified under five basic formats, namely: submission, compromise, stand-off, dominant third-party intervention, and withdrawal (Vuchinich, 1990; Leung, 2001; Norrick & Spitz, 2008). I will add one more type to the classification for the

resolution of multilingual couples' disagreement, namely topic shift. As discussed in Section 2.5.4, topic shifting occurs when the subject becomes unrelated to the talk in prior turns and new referents are used (Maynard, 1980). Couples frequently change the topic as a strategy to avoid submitting during disagreement. The terms provide a window on the sequential mechanisms of discord. Table 6-1 shows different processes of ending multilingual couples' disagreement talk. Stand-off is found to be the most common format of terminating the disagreement. Vuchinich focuses on the structure and frequency of the disagreement termination, taken from American family dinner time and proposes two terminal exchanges to accomplish consensus (1990). He attributes the power between participant,s and the avoidance of losing face as the main trigger for the high frequency outcome of stand-off when no consensus is achieved. The assumption of win/lose logic in multilingual couples' conversations may be inadequate and misleading, as the situation of no winner or loser of negotiation takes place recurrently. Both stand-off and withdrawal allow the discord to arise again later. Particularly for couples, their goal of communication is rather to facilitate the discussion than defeat the other interlocutor. The focal point of this chapter is located on the process of how participants deploy different strategies to maintain their oppositional stances. The least common ending of disagreement is withdrawal (2.5%). There are no examples provided below which show that participants physically leave the arena. They instead decide to cut off the discussion or even stop recording. Lastly, The analysis will begin with the less frequent format: withdrawal, and finish with the most common one: stand-off.

As Figure 6-1 shows, 65 out of 120 disagreement episodes end without resolution, which signifies that more than half of the couples maintain their oppositional stances in the negotiation. In stand-off, couples tend to change speech activities rather than

give in. For instance, humour and silence are the strategies often deployed by multilingual couples to avoid submitting. That is not to say that the hostility between couples becomes more intense. On the contrary, couples seem perfectly comfortable with the no winner-no loser situation. Participants might have realised the other party is not going to align with him or her, and concession is not accepted, which is considered unproblematic. Topic shift is the second common resolution of couples' disagreement. Submission occupies one fourth of the cases of terminating disagreement, which ranks as the third highest. Only 14.17% of the discord ends with compromise. Those who terminate the disagreement with consent are the submission and compromise types, and occurrence rate is less than 40% for such examples. In the cases of dominant third party intervention, topic shift, and withdrawal, the results are the same as stand-off, where couples retain their oppositions.

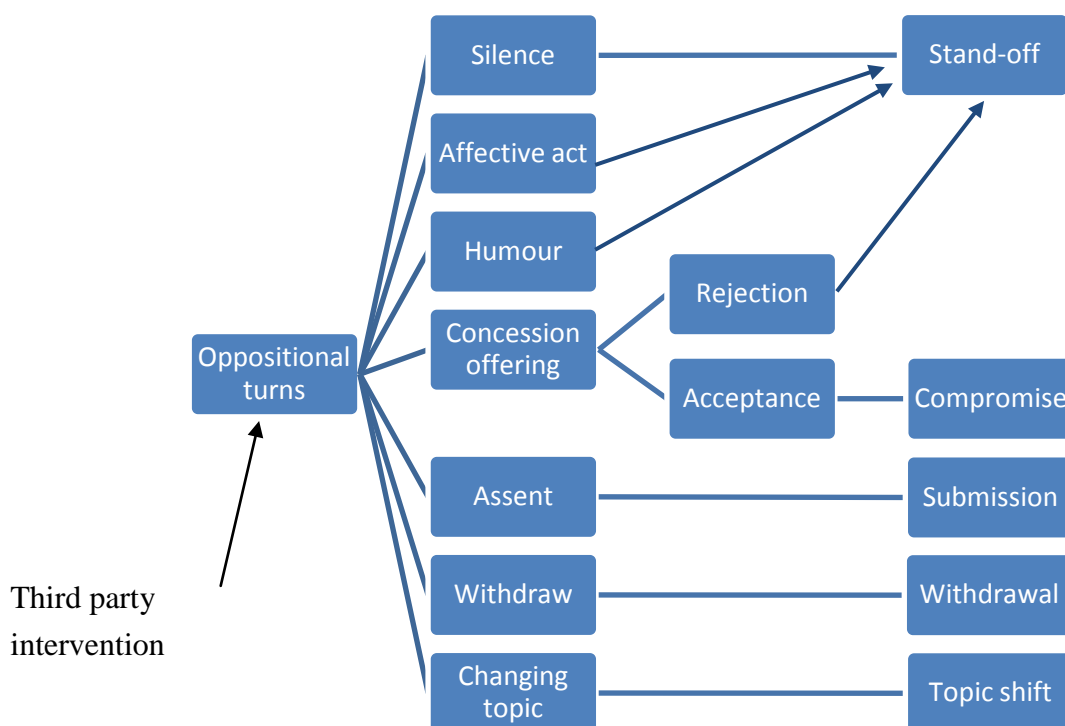


Table 6-1 The process of resolving multilingual couples' disagreement

Figure 6-1 Numbers of episodes in 6 formats of disagreement resolution

	<i>Total</i>	Topic- shift	Stand-off	Withdrawal	Submission	3rd party intervention	Compromise
American	4		1	2			1
British G	8	2	3		1	1	1
British K	6		6				
British T	5	1	1		2		1
Dutch	7	1	3		1		2
Filipino	4	1	2		1		
French	8				6		2
French TW	2	1			1		
Irish	5	1	1		2		1
Italian	10	2	6		2		
Japanese	2						2
Nigerian	5	2	2		1		
Norwegian	8	1	5				2
Pakistani	23	7	5	1	5	3	2
Russian	2	1	1				
South African	3		1		1	1	
Uruguayan	18	5	3		7		3
<i>Total</i>	120	25	40	3	30	5	17
%	100	20.8%	33.33%	2.5%	25%	4.2%	14.17.%

The extracts in the following sections will be cut short to focus on the analysis of how



the disagreement ends. In addition, a concise version of extracts discussed in the previous chapters has been provided to avoid redundancy.

### 6.3 Withdrawal

Withdrawal as the most destructive and emotionally charged format of ending a disagreement talk (Dersley & Wootton, 2001), occurs merely three times in the data. The three episodes recorded are all conducted by the husbands, and two are from the same couple, Ali and Chin. Extracts 75 and 76 are selected from two different couples to demonstrate two ways of withdrawing from disagreement. In the first extract, Ali clearly shows his reluctance to continue the discussion.

(75/71)

806        A    我們不會這麼快回台灣

807        C    I know, but at least half a year 啊(.) half a year也很短啊

808 →     A    <No>,我們只在-er是。現在不要討論這個。(14.0)

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

806        A: We are not coming back to Taiwan so soon.

807        C: I know, but at least half a year ah,(.) half a year is also quite short.

808 →     A: <No>. we just-er are. Don't talk about this right now. 】

The discussion begins with how long Ali and Chin will stay with Ali's parents in the U.S.A. Chin suggests not taking too much luggage as she expects to return to Taiwan in six months. Ali's response at line 806 is an overt counterclaim, which denotes they will not come back so quickly. Chin appears to agree with his statement at the beginning by uttering the positive token "*I know*". Then the token is followed by

another discourse marker “*but*”, which indicates her real proposition - the stay is supposed to be short. There is a grammatical error in Chin’s utterance when she uses “at least” where she might mean “at the most”. She code-switches to Chinese to repair and emphasise her stance. Therefore, the grammar mistake does not have any impact on the understanding. Ali immediately replies by using a negation marker in his first language and then switches to Chinese for explanation. The hesitating sentence signals that he needs more time to contemplate a good reason for persuasion, or is indicative of lack of vocabulary. The husband makes a withdrawal statement in his last turn (line 808). When the participant becomes too distraught to continue, he or she might decide to withdraw from the conversation activity (Vuchinich, 1990, p. 132). A lengthy silence is evidence that Ali decides to suspend the discussion.

(76)

- 017           Z    啊如-如果想不到辦法咧
- 018           S    我就晚上不會回來了
- 019           Z    這樣子喔(.)你>就是要逃避就是<了(1.0)是不是?(4.0)對
- 020                    呀反正你想不到辦法你就可以-不見啊(.)那我咧? (3.0)huh?
- 021                    (5.0)你答應他們的事情(.)反正你>做不到你可以不見<啊
- 022                    (..)要來收:尾的(..)要來擦屁股的又是我啊(4.0)
- 023           S    。等一下再說啦(.)等一下。
- 024           Z    早上也不能談訥(.)啊晚上也不能談訥(.)那請問什麼
- 025                    時候要談?
- 026           B    。中午啊。
- 027           Z    中午?<你還在睡覺>啊!你<命好>啊!你可以睡到中午啊↑
- 028                    (6.0)

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

017        Z: 【ah, what-if (you) cannot find a solution

018        S: I then won't come back tonight.

019        Z: Yeah right . >You are going to escape, < (1.0) aren't you? Right,

020                you can disappear- if you don't find a solution anyway. How about me? (3.0) huh?

021                (5.0) Things you promised them,(.) if you >cannot make it, you can disappear< anyway.

022                (..)The one who has to deal: with it (..), pick up the pieces behind you is me again. (4.0)

023        S:    ° Talk about it later. (.) Wait a moment.    °

024        Z: We cannot talk about it in the morning,(.) nor talk about it at night. (.) Then may I ask

025                when can we talk?

026        S: At noon.

027        Z: At noon? <You are still asleep.> You are so <lucky>! You can sleep till noon.

028                (6.0) 】

Withdrawal can also be used as a strategic move to discredit the interlocutor as excerpt (76) demonstrates (Vuchinich, 1990). The second example of withdrawal is taken from the conversation between Saied and Zoe where they are discussing the solution for paying their debts. Saied told her he will think about it later, which is not a satisfactory answer for Zoe. She questions him by asking a conditional query about what happens if they do not find a solution. Saied might be joking or showing his determination when he replies “I am not coming back if I do not find solution”. No matter what his strategy is, it aggravates the situation. Zoe shows her anger and dissatisfaction by uttering three questions in a row. She complains that she will be the one who deals with the debt when he escapes. Saied attempts to postpone the discussion, but Zoe does not cooperate with him. She continues asking for the exact time they can discuss this issue, and he offers a time when he is actually not available. Zoe points out that he is usually still in bed at noon, which does not allow for

discussion. Her utterance in line 024 is a rhetorical question, which has the force of a strong negative assertion (Quirk, *et al.*, 1985). Saied's reaction is simply not to respond to the challenge addressed to him.

Both cases demonstrate that there is no consent between the couples when one of the participants withdraws from the negotiation. The disagreement remains and the problem might recur later. Likewise, dominant third-party intervention might lead to a similar result. According to Vuchinich, children are in the powerless status of the hierarchy in the cross generation conflict, and parents play the role of terminating the disagreement (1990). The examples below will demonstrate the opposite where children are the third party intervention for their parents' disagreement.

#### **6.4 Dominant Third-party Intervention**

Dominant third-party intervention in my study is slightly different from Vuchinich's suggestion that third parties have higher power status than the participants (1990). Instead of assent from both parties after the intervention, the couples may change the topic, maintain their oppositional stances, or one co-participant compromises, or even submits. The role of the third party is similar to the change of focus and postpones the issue. There are more possibilities for other types of resolution to occur later. The power relationship between parents and the younger generation is not one of the main concerns in the current study. However, it is interesting to note that children can mitigate the disagreement between their parents without breaking the hierarchy of the authority in the family. In extract (77), Gina and Steven are discussing where they should go to celebrate their son's birthday, while their son is present. Gina is not happy with a certain restaurant chain her son has chosen, and Steven thinks she

should let their son decide where he wants to go because it is his birthday. After Steven's objection, Gina attempts to legitimate her authority as a mother, by claiming that she is the one who gave birth to him. Steven's response at line 459 shows he does not agree that a mother has the right to make decisions for their children. The son intervenes in the discord by compromising. The negotiation of a compromise can be extended when there are third parties involved, as there might be more possibilities for concession offers (*ibid*). He does not want to upset his mother, so he asks Gina where she feels like going, rather than insisting on his own choice. This represents the effort of the couple's son to mitigate his parents' disagreement. At the end, Gina manages to choose the restaurant for her son's birthday.

(77/61)

456 G Oh-不是我的birthday噯?

457 S 算「什麼」東西

458 G 「可是」我生他啊我給他birth啊

459 S So?

460 → K 那妳要去哪裡?

(Steven 48, British & Gina 47; K=kid)

456 → G: 【Oh-not my birthday yo?

457 S: What 「do」 you care?

458 → G: 「But」 I gave him birth. I gave birth to him.

459 → S: So?

460 → K: Then where do you want to go? 】

Extract 78 is taken from the disagreement between Andy and Pisces about learning how to make rice dumplings. Andy is attempting to convince his wife to learn the new

dish and offers all kinds of help. Pisces shows her strong rejection by uttering negation markers together with code switching *no, no, no* in her first language, albeit she is laughing simultaneously. Both Andy and Pisces raise their voices when disagreeing. The third party's turn occurs in line 630 when Jerry, their eldest son, starts to scream in order to stop the discord. Vuchinich (1990) argues that the third party's turn is often directive, which opposes the conflict activity. Jerry's reaction might be due to fear of conflict, or not being able to understand his parents' joke. However, it is far from being directive. Andy apologises to their son in conjunction with code switching to Chinese, and repeats and reiterates in a different word to reinforce the strength of the utterance. The disagreement is resolved temporarily.

(78/60)

- 628        A    yeah. すみません, boss! Ten-twenty 粽子 (.) there's  
 629                enough bamboo leaves we can RECYCLE for twenty 粽子  
 630 →    J    (SCREAM)  
 631        P    @ 不要@不要不要  
 632        A    對不起Jerry對不起呀! ah-(0.8)抱歉! (1.0)

(Andy 38, South African & Pisces 38)

- 628        A:yeah. sorry, boss! Ten-twenty rice dumpling (.) there's  
 629                enough bamboo leaves we can RECYCLE for twenty 粽子  
 630 →    J: (SCREAM)  
 631        P: @ No @ No, no  
 632        A: Sorry, Jerry, Sorry! ah-(0.8) apologise! (1.0)】

The third example is a different case as the intervening third party is a baby. It is not intended to be an intervention in his parents' discord. Although the baby crying along

with the disagreement might be completely coincidental, it leads to the end of the negotiation. Saied is teasing his wife when he claims that Zoe became intimidating after they married, and he generalises the change to apply to every Taiwanese woman. He describes this phenomenon as an unchangeable convention. Zoe does not directly defend herself or deny the comment. Instead, she makes a counterclaim that Pakistani men play tricks when they pursue girls as an argument. She agrees that her attitude has been changed, but his change is even greater. She also disagrees with the comment about Taiwanese people, and shifts the focus to Pakistani people's behaviour. National stereotypes are being produced negatively by both parties. Piller (1999) suggests that women tend to produce negative national stereotypes about their own country of origin, whereas men produce negative national stereotypes about their partner's country of origin more often. Even when women produce negative stereotypes regarding their partner's nation, they associate it with their own one. The couple in the excerpt below could not continue the discord, because their baby started crying and Zoe had to go and find out what the baby needed.

(79/38)

- 019           S     因為結婚.溫柔啊?結婚以後要很兇
- 020           Z     <hmm>↑?
- 021           S     這個是台灣規定的，不能改變
- 022           Z     這個是你:們巴基斯坦>人才這<樣吧?(0.8)
- 023                   結婚之前都會騙- 騙女:孩子
- 024   →           (BABY CRY)
- 025           Z     你想幹嘛?啊?你想幹嘛?你這個臭弟

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 019           S:   【because getting: married gentle ah? After married, one has to be very aggressive.

- 020        Z:    <hmm>↑?
- 021        S:    This is regulated in Taiwan. (It) cannot be changed.
- 022        Z:    This is you: only Pakistani people> are like this< ? (0.8)
- 023                Before getting married, (you) all trick-trick girls.
- 024 →        (BABY CRY)
- 025        Z: What do you want? ah? What do you want? You stinky boy. 】

The two types of resolving disagreement discussed above, withdrawal and dominant third-party intervention, which occur rarely, leave the discord without consensus. Compromise and submission characterise disagreement talks which end with a conclusion.

## 6.5        **Compromise**

The percentage of discord talks that terminate in compromise is 14.17 (Figure 6-1). Eleven couples have chosen to compromise and settle their disagreement by mutual concession. Extracts 80 to 82 are three episodes that demonstrate how assent is achieved. In the first episode, Bjorn is complaining about Paola spending too much time gambling and coming home late. After two turn exchanges, Paola's excuse is not accepted. She decides to offer a concession of promising not to gamble so often and spend more time with her husband at lines 77 and 79. While she attempts to compromise, Bjorn is still in doubt in the two overlapping turns. The concession offer might not be accepted immediately. Paola has to make more of an effort in addition to gambling less, such as going out with Bjorn more often in order to achieve her goal. She uses a softener 這樣好嗎 (*Is this okay*) and finally her offer receives a positive response when Bjorn utters an agreeing token *hm*. It is worth noting that a concession



establishes a middle ground that moves toward the opposing position but still disagrees with it (Vuchinich, 1990).

(80/20)

- 072 B 那現在要..整天就會打麻將.打麻將一打.  
073 誰不生氣?(1.5)也..一打一天一夜誰不生  
074 氣?(..)那自己>也不知道自己在做什麼<(1.0)  
075 P 那時間過得很快啦.我>都沒有在看時間了<嘛 (2.0)  
076 B 這種是理由喔?@(1.0)是嗎@?我搞不清楚  
077 → P 好啦好啦,我等下「要少」  
078 B 「這為什麼」  
079 → P 「少打牌..多陪你(.)聊天.出去(..)可以嗎?  
080 B 去哪裡「去」  
081 P 「這」樣好嗎?  
082 B hm

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 072 → B: 【So now (you) want..all day just (to) play Majiang, play Majiang and once=  
073 How can I not get upset? (1.5) also.. once (you) begin, (you) play one day and one  
074 night, how can I not get upset? (..) Then you> (are) also not aware of what you're  
doing < (1.0)  
075 P: The time passes very quickly. I > didn't look at the time. < (2.0)  
076 B: Can this be an excuse? @(1.0) Is it? @ I don't understand.  
077 → P: Alright, alright, later I 「will play less」  
078 B: 「That is why」  
079 → P: 「I will play less and spend more time with you (.) chatting, and going out (.), is it okay?  
080 B: Where 「to」?

081 P:            L(Is) thisJ okay?

082 B:hm J

A concession signals the interlocutor that he or she is ready to end the disagreement, but unwilling to submit (Vuchinich, 1990), and its function is similar to another term “pre-first topic closing-offering” (Schriffrin & Sack, 1973).

In extract 96, the oppositional positions are established by French-Taiwanese couple, Gregoire and Sophie, who are discussing a better location to place the nappy changing table. Sophie starts the question with where to change the diaper for their daughters at night. Gregoire’s initial reply is in the bathroom inside their bedroom, but he is concerned that there might not be enough space. Sophie emphasises that it is located there only for night time and should not be a problem. His solution is to put the table at the corner of the bathroom and the concession is accepted immediately.

(81)

728 G    rMaybe yeah, but if this is inside, it’s gonna be a struggle=

729 S    LWell, actuallyJ

730 G    =to open the door

731 S    But just for the-, for the night (2.0)

732 → G    Or we can leave it-< in the corner>(2.0)

734 S    Yeah

(Gregoire 31, French & Sophie 34)

Extract 82 is the last example of compromise to demonstrate that the acceptance of a concession can be tacit (Vachinich, 1990). The negotiation of borrowing money from

the husband has been enduring for two minutes with multiple turn exchanges. The disagreement is initiated by Chin's request for transferring money to her bank account which was rejected by Ali at first. Ali claims that he already gave her some at the beginning of the month, but Chin said the amount is less than he was supposed to transfer. They carry on their discussion about why the money was spent so quickly this month. Ali concludes there is a misunderstanding which can be interpreted as mitigation for the discord. Correspondingly, Chin displays her willingness to compromise, which can be seen at line 591, where she uses the pronoun "we" to clarify that both of them have to make an effort on managing expenditures. After a five second silence, Ali offers the concession that he can lend money to her, with the condition "if I need your help later". Chin agrees immediately in the next turn and reiterates that her intention is to negotiate for a better result, because they spent too much recently. Both parties agree to compromise on this issue.

(82/8)

582 A Well-Xiao Chin,that was(..) 妳沒有講清楚妳

583 (2.0)

584 C 所以這::幾:這幾個月>會錢用得比較緊, 所以我才跟

585 你講說<我們要省一點

586 (5.0)

587 → A 好, 可是-如果之後需要妳幫忙(1.0)

588 C <當然吶>,可是就因為我們錢花很兇, 我才跟你講我才

589 跟你<溝通>

590 A Hm(5.0) 。好。

(Ali 37, American & Chin 36)

582 A: 【Well-XiaoChin,that was. (..)You didn't make it clear, you=

583 (2.0)

584 C: So the budget is tighter the:se months.> That's why I told you

585 we have to spend less.<

586 (5.0)

587 → A: Okay, but- if I need your help later on,(1.0)

588 C: <Of course>. But it is exactly because we spent too much, I said to you, I negotiated

589 with you

590 A: Hm,(5.0) ° fine. ° **】**

## 6.6 Submission

When the second slot is assent after the opposition move, the assent can be referred to as agreement and the disagreement terminates with one participant's submission (Vuchinich, 1990). The number of occurrences in submission is 25% in the multilingual couples' data. Twelve couples are observed in the situation where one of the co-participants gives in, and agrees to the other's proposition. Four examples are chosen to demonstrate submission as a format of discord termination. The first three are episodes where the couples use Chinese, and last couple use English. Extracts 83 to 84 are examples where Bjorn relinquishes his positions, and extract 85 is an example where Paola yields to the instruction of her husband. Seven out of eighteen episodes of Paola and Bjorn's disagreement end with submission. Bjorn gives in five times, whereas Paola submits twice. The first episode is a clear submission structure-two oppositional turns followed by assent. Bjorn's opposition begins with his proposition that it is not necessary to buy underwear for him as he still has plenty. Despite her husband's refutation, Paola insists on purchasing new pairs of underwear for him. At line 475, Bjorn gives in to the disagreement and agrees to let her buy

some more.

(83)

472 P 啊！我順便幫你 你幫我挑我的 我幫你挑你的(1.0)這樣公平嘛 對不對？

473 B 我不用了 <我有了>(.)我有啊@我還有(.)我還夠穿

474 P 我不管 我要買 我要幫你買兩三套性感一點

475 → B 好啦(.) 隨便啦

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

472 P: 【Ah I'll help you, too. You help me choose mine. I help you choose yours.(1.0) That's  
fair, right?

473 B: I don't need any. <I have>(.) I have@ I still have (.) I have enough to wear.

474 P: I don't care. I want to buy them. I want to buy two or three sexy ones.

475 → B: Alright (.) (It's) up to you 】

In extract 84, Paola asks her husband's opinion about whether she looks better when her hair is down. Bjorn's answer is based on the fact that they are going to ride on a motorbike, so he thinks it would be better to tie her hair up. Paola refers to their earlier conversation where Bjorn mentioned they will go by car, and also quotes his own words "it is windy" to reassure his answer. Bjorn disagrees by recalling the difficulty of finding a parking place first, but he changes his mind after half a second's hesitation. He gives in and agrees to drive. The disagreement sequence ends when one participant maintains his or her original stance, and the other concedes (Norrick & Spitz, 2008). The focus of the discussion shifts, but it is very likely Paola will have her hair down as she planned since they will be travelling by car.

(84)

363 P: 啊我頭髮要放下來？還是要放起來？放下來比較年輕？

364 B 騎摩托車，當然綁起來比較好啊！

365 P 你不是說要開車？

366 B 嗯

367 P 風很大？

368 B 那裡不好停啦，等下(.)開車?好啦！開車就開車啊

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

363 P: 【Ah shall I put my hair down or tie it up? I look younger when my hair is down.

364 B: Riding a motorbike, of course it's better to tie it up.

365 P: Didn't you say you wanna drive?

366 B: hmm

367 P: Is it very windy?

368 B: It is difficult to park there. Wait, (.) by car? Fine! I'll drive if you want. 】

Submission can be indirect and not overt. Different participants seem to have different consent strategies. Three episodes above show the husband's submission. Bjorn tends to submit promptly and directly whereas Paola employs more indirect strategies to give in. Extract 85 is taken as an example of how the wife concedes in a disagreement. Paola suggests that she can drive if Bjorn is tired. But the suggestion is not accepted, as Bjorn does not want to run the risk due to her inexperience. Paola takes it personally and attributes it to her untrustworthy driving skills. Bjorn maintains that driving is a serious business, and it is too risky to try it out on the freeway. Without receiving her husband's permission, Paola attempts to save face and submits indirectly. Verbal submission can be indirect, rather than overt (Vuchinich, 1990). At line 545, her utterance prefaced with "in fact" denotes she is afraid of driving on the

freeway and how nervous she might become when driving at high speed. It can be deemed as her assent to Bjorn's decision.

(85)

- 540 P 啊反正這個>沒有紅綠燈也不用轉彎<啊.我開四十就好了啊
- 541 B 不要呀(..)速度都這麼快(..)妳沒有經驗.不要!
- 542 P 你┐不相┐信我喔?
- 543 B       ┐好啦!┐ 不是相信不相信.這不能賭的啊!這:不-是開玩笑的
- 544       (..)不可以呀(5.0)
- 545 P 其實我開快我-開那個快車我也會怕呢.真的!喔那個腸子都會打結

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 540 P: 【Ah anyway this- > (there's) no traffic light and no need to turn<. I'll drive at the speed  
of 40.
- 541 B: No! (..) They all drive very fast. (..)You are inexperienced. No!
- 542 P: You ┐ don't trust┐ me?
- 543 B:       ┐ Alright,┐ it is not about trust. (You) cannot bet on this:.. Not joking.
- 544       (..) No. (5.0)
- 545 P: In fact, if I drive fast, I will be scared. Really! My stomach is in knots.  】

From the examples above, it can be seen that the agreeing token 好啦 (*alright*) in Chinese is used frequently as a signal of submission when the participant is ready to give in. It is overt and direct submission. The same holds for English token *okay*, which can be exemplified by the extract below.

(86)

- 127 S       rice cooker

128 G Yes, the rice 〔cooker〕  
 129 S 〔rice 〕 cooker  
 130 Are you sure with the rice is -? my mum may go to  
 131 prepare some porridge, she knows how to do this.  
 132 hm, the only thing is (COUGH) you don't switch  
 133 off the power supply.  
 134 G Ya (..) but if we don't switch off the power supply  
 135 Then it's going to stay on the warm position,  
 136 (..) and there is still something on warm  
 137 → S No, it warms up (1.0) AH, okay. yeah

(Gregoire 31, French & Sophie 34)

Extract 86 is chosen to demonstrate that submission can occur later in a turn following initial disagreement. Sophie and Gregoire are discussing things to do before Sophie has her C-section. Sophie's mother will fly in from Taiwan to help, and Gregoire needs to explain clearly to his mother in law about the utilities, specifically about the rice cooker. Sophie's proposition is her mother is not familiar with the switch, although she knows how to use the cooker well. She suggests keeping the power on at all times, whereas Gregoire thinks the power supply should be switched off after the rice is cooked. At line 137, Sophie utters a negation marker *no*, but does not finish her sentence. The use of one and a half seconds' pause and higher voice denotes her stance change. After contemplating, she decides to switch her oppositional position to assent and it can be proved by her use of the tokens *okay, yeah*.



## 6.7 Stand-off

This section focuses on the most frequent format of resolving a disagreement, namely stand-off. It can be as simple as two slots of oppositional moves without assent (Norrick & Spitz, 2008). On the other hand, it can be the failure result of different strategies that are employed to induce the opponents into submission or compromise. A number of strategies are found in stand-off situations, such as affective act, concession offer-reject, humour, and silence, and all of these strategies will be elaborated and discussed in detail in the following subsections.

### 6.7.1 General Opposition

When participants continue maintaining their oppositions without anyone's submission, the negotiation ends with a stand-off situation. Due to the lack of a terminal exchange, their contradictory positions may carry on as extracts 87 to 108 provided below will demonstrate.

(87)

052 E 他英文不太好啊

053 S 亂講他英文-

054 E 他英文我聽不懂

055 S 你的英文人家才聽不(懂) (10.0)

(Eirik 59, Norwegian& Sally 50)

052 E: 【His English is not so good.

053 S: Nonsense. His English -

054 E: I don't understand his English.

The first example demonstrates a simple pattern of disagreement that ends with stand-off. Eirik's utterance is in response to Sally's questioning about why he did not ask for more details when he talked to their friend. Eirik puts the blame on the friend's low English proficiency which is disapproved of by Sally. The Norwegian husband reiterates that he has difficulty understanding the friend in English. His wife contradicts him by saying that it is even more difficult for other people to understand "his English". The wife uses the same expression her husband had used in the previous turn to disagree with him. Partial repetition can be used to reframe the stated proposition as disagreement through sarcasm (Kakava, 2002). At the end, the couple drop the discussion and move on to another topic of conversation.

(88)

- 465 F 就大事我做,小事你做主>是?<  
466 K 不!  
467 F 大小事都是我做主啊?- ㄅㄛ  
468 K ㄟ當然ㄟ 啊  
469 F hm這買房子(..)選的地方不是我做主的  
470 K 是呀  
471 F I -N ㄅㄛ ↑  
472 K ㄟ沒ㄟ有!我只是建議- ㄅㄛ在-在看哪裡啊 ㄟ  
473 F ㄟ你建議?你就是要這ㄟ 張!

(Ken 40 British & Fanny 50)

- 465 F: 【It is me who makes major decisions and you make minor decisions. Right?  
466 K: No!

467 F: I make all the decisions? - ɾohɿ  
468 K:                      ʟOf course! ʟ ah  
469 F: hm, the location of the house (..) we bought wasn't decided by me.  
470 K: Yes!  
471 F: I -N ɾoɿ ↑  
472 K:    ʟ No,ʟ I only suggest - ɾ in-in where (we should) look atɿ  
473 F:                      ʟYou suggest? You wanted precisely thisʟ one! ʟ

### 6.7.2 *Affective Act*

acts to terminate their disagreement. Affective acts employed by Paola (kisses), Bjorn (affection expression), and Saied (physical touch) are provided below.

The first example (extract 89) is drawn from the episode below where Paola is explaining which fragrance of perfume she has purchased. Paola is struggling to pronounce the correct names of the fruits in Chinese in her second turn. She rectifies the term watermelon to melon, but Bjorn does not believe there is such a fruit fragrance. His discord can be observed in the utterance *No such scent*. There are four overlapping turns during the discussion, and CS occurs in one of the overlaps. When disagreements are produced with overlap or without a pause between turns, it indicates pure opposition and can be aggravated (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). Bjorn switches to Paola's mother tongue *rosa por favor* (line 067) to correct her after using the same word in Chinese in the previous turn. The CS highlights his epistemic stance and strengthens the degree of certainty. His motivation for the switch can be seen as a means to facilitate her understanding. He acknowledges her claim that rose and melon have similar smell, but challenges her with the existence of watermelon and rose perfume. Paola kisses her husband instead of directly responding to Bjorn's challenge about her proficiency in Chinese. She manages to stop him from continuing to criticise her. It also terminates the discussion about what scent of perfume she bought.

(89)

- 58 P 啊- 人家什麼東西都發明< 丿
- 59 B 也-:::西<sup>↓</sup>:瓜的-香味是什麼?
- 60 (.)有西瓜香味嗎?
- 61 P 啊不是西瓜那個耶 ↑ (TSK)那個什麼(1.0)那個melon ↓ (..)
- 62 B 丿不<sup>↓</sup> 會有那種香水啊

- 63 P      ㄌ啊ㄌ
- 64 B      你不要亂講啊 ㄖ##<玫瑰>啊ㄎ
- 65 P                      ㄌ啊>反正有一點像<ㄌ
- 66 B      ㄖrosa por favorㄎ
- 67 P      ㄌ啊玫-hm都ㄌ
- 68 B      玫瑰跟西瓜擦什麼
- 69 P      <好↑嘛>
- 70 B      嗯
- 71 P      反正有:不同香味就對了啦
- 71 B      那亂七八糟講, 中文妳到底 ㄖ會不會ㄎ?
- 73 → P                      ㄌ(KISSES)ㄌ (6.0)

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 58 P      【Ah- ㄖ>They invent everything<ㄎ
- 59 B              ㄌ also      what is -:::waterㄌ :melon's-scent?
- 60              (.) Do they have watermelon scent?
- 61 P      Ah not that- watermelon ↑ (tsk) That- what- (1.0) that- melon ↓ (..)
- 62 B      ㄖNoㄎ such scent
- 63 P      ㄌAhㄌ
- 64 B      Stop speaking nonsense ㄖ##      <rose> ah ㄎ
- 65 P                      ㄌah> anyway they're quite similar<ㄌ
- 66 B      ㄖrosa por favorㄎ
- 67 P      ㄌah ro(se)-hm allㄌ
- 68 B      What about rose and watermelon?
- 69 P      < alright↑>
- 70 B      hm
- 71 P: Anyway there are different scents.



068 P: 【I won't be able to win if we argue. So fine, if I can't win,  
 069 I just don't speak. If I stop talking to you, you won't be able to stand it.  
 070 Ah, this way, I will win, and I don't have to speak.  
 071 B: Is that so?  
 072 P: Of course!  
 073 → B: No, then we go take a bath later. 】

Sarcastic irony, which occurs frequently with intimates, can be observed in extract 91, where Zoe complains that Saied spent time accompanying his friend to court, but did not have time to relocate to the new house. Saied's confirmation can be seen as pragmatic failure, based on the fact that he treats his wife's challenge as a check on the validity of the event. Zoe has to clarify that she is complaining by offering more details. She questions him about how he can help his friend, when he was absent for his own registration process, and reminds him that she is the one who went to court on his behalf. The evidence gives Zoe an advantage to win the disagreement. There is a noticeable laugh in the middle position of Zoe's second turn (line 115), which mitigates her challenge. Humour creates a playful atmosphere in the interaction (Kotthoff, 2007), and hence functions as a softener in the disagreement. Saied acknowledges the signal, as his wife might not actually be angry with him. He attempts to use an affective act to distract her, instead of continuing the disagreement and non-verbal movement can be evidenced by Zoe's utterance *why are you touching me* followed by laughter. Their discord ends without resolution.

(91)

111 Z 還帶你朋友去法院(.)公-公證  
 112 S 對

- 113           Z   >你在辦身份證的那些東西<(.)都是我自己去法院那邊  
114                   公證的,<喔 ↓>你什麼時候變那麼厲害(.)還可以帶別人  
115                   去那裡公證?hunh?(.)hunh?這個你@有話講嗎?  
116           S   oh ah結果我  
117   →   Z   幹嘛碰我啊@@

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 111           Z: 【And take your friend to court (.) to certify it  
112           S: Yes.  
113           Z:   >When you applied for your own identification card, <(.) I was the one who went to  
114                   the court to have it certified. <OH ↓> when did you become so good (.) that you 'd be  
115                   able to help others certify. hunh? hunh? (about) this@ (do) you have anything to say?  
116           S: oh ah, it turns out, I  
117   →   Z: Why are you touching me?    】

### 6.7.3      *Concession Offer- Rejected*

In the discussion of compromise termination, assent is achieved if one party offers concession and the other co-participant accepts it. When the offer is rejected, the oppositional positions remain and the disagreement ends with stand-off again. It is important to note that concession offers can be implicit and indirect. Two episodes of parties rejecting a concession are provided below as examples.

(92/21)

- 041           Z   啊真的就是這樣子「啊 (..)我」今天被你害到-這個地步  
042           S                           「不能這樣」  
043           Z   我也認了(CHOKE)



044 S >好啦好啦<.妳-妳再明天忍好不好? 如果沒有出一個  
 045 禮拜(.)>沒有出幾天<妳再忍好不好?(1.0) 不要這樣啦!  
 046 → 我真的(.)我-<太>了解妳了(.)問題┐是都┑是我=  
 047 Z ┐事情┑  
 048 S =┐給妳的┑.我知道(.)┐沒有錯!┑  
 049 Z ┐對(.)對┑┐ ┐八你跟┑我說到八月底(..) 所-有事情會解決(.)  
 050 現在什麼時候了?(.)又快過了兩個月了

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

041 Z: AH THE TRUTH IS EXACTLY LIKE THIS ┐AH(..)I┑ today you are the one who  
 got me into this.  
 042 S: (You) ┐cannot do this!┑  
 043 Z: I give up. (CHOKE)  
 044 S: >Alright, alright<, you-you tolerate till tomorrow, alright? If within one week, >just a  
 045 few more days<, can you tolerate a bit longer? (1.0) Don't do this! I really,(.)  
 046 → I know you <too well>. The problems ┐are all┑ because of me=I  
 047 Z: ┐Things┑  
 048 S: =┐gave you┑ (this). I know(.)┐You're right.┑  
 049 Z: ┐-yeah, yeah!┑ ┐Aug-you told me┑ wait till the end of August  
 (..) every-thing will be solved.  
 050 What date is it now? Almost another two months have passed. 】

Saied and Zoe are the only couple who are recorded as displaying all six different formats of resolving disagreements. Their number of discord episodes, twenty three, is also the highest. Extract 92 is chosen as an example of a strong emotional and heated disagreement, where concession is offered as a pre-closing, but fails to end the discord (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). The concession is plausibly accepted when the

wife answers *yes*. The discord begins with Zoe's utterance, which signifies a serious consequence if their financial problem remains, and attributes the problem to Saied's procrastination. Saied uses an agreeing token as a softener at the beginning of his utterances, both at line 40 and 44, to calm her down and attempts to stop her saying or doing anything harmful. Zoe appears to be so affected that she has difficulty breathing during the conversation. In his third turn, Saied offers several concessions - that he will find a solution in the next few days and admits his fault. The wife does not overtly accept the concession despite the affirmative marker being used. The marker *yeah, yeah* might indicate she expected his admission, but is not satisfied. Zoe's utterance overlapping with Saied's turn also displays her opposition. She expresses her reason for not accepting his offer through reminding him that he fails to carry out his promise. Therefore, their propositions remain at a stand-off.

The second episode is recorded when Vladimir and Jenny are playing a word puzzle game. This example is interesting as the concession offer is initially accepted, but the couple maintains their oppositions. Vladimir begins with his complaint about his wife's limited contribution to the game. He starts a new round of guessing the word with the letter O in the middle and assumes Jenny is not making any effort. Jenny's excuse is her limited knowledge of English vocabulary and she does not have an answer for this particular question in the game. The husband contradicts her statement, but offers a suggestion at line 120. From her response, she accepts his suggestion and gives an answer which turns out not to be the correct word. Then she uses it as evidence to support her previous explanation. Vladimir is unwilling to accept the result, and feels frustrated about his ultimately unsuccessful strategy.

(93)

118           V   Hm..It's O..You are not thinking, you (are) just waiting for me, right?

119           J   Because I am sure I don't know this word.

120   →     V   You cannot be sure! So why don't you just try to think, positively, I

121                   already gave you some ideas about the sound combination

122           J   Tomato, see?  $\neg$ not  $\neg$  tomato@@

123           V                   └Great!┐

124           V   Na na

125           J   @@

126           V   I didn't say you have to prove that I was wrong!

(Vladimir 37, Russian & Jenny 34)

#### **6.7.4       *Humour***

In 4.3.5 I have discussed how humour functions as a discourse strategy to mitigate disagreement. Disagreement and humour are two seemingly contradictory notions. However, humour can serve the function of disagreement diffuser (Habib, 2008). Extracts 94 to 96 are examples where couples deploy teasing, joking, or laughing at themselves to terminate the disagreement. Extract 94 is subsequent to the previous episode (6) where Bjorn pointed out Paola's different reaction after their quarrel recently, and wanted to know if there was anything wrong with their relationship. Bjorn questions his wife about why she stops talking to him after their quarrel. Paola explains that she needs some time to calm down and she will talk to him again when her emotional state improves. The answer is not accepted by the husband, and he grumbles that he is treated like an animal. Paola's strategy is to change the focus by playing a children's game with him. Bjorn's laugh indicates the humour is accepted.

Witty remarks contribute to the conversation whereas jokes are used to distract from or disrupt it (Kaufman, 1991). At line 33, Paola utters a children's chant *One, two, three, wooden man* to play with Bjorn, which can be seen as use of a funny expression. The strategy successfully distracts the interlocutor, since Bjorn's perception is positive, and the negotiation ends with mutual laughter. However, it may lead the disagreement to topic shift, or remain as a stand-off (Norrick & Spitz, 2008).

(94/6)

- 024 P 你跟我-我們吵架對不對?啊我吵不贏你啦  
 025 所以說我都是-好啊我.吵.跟你.贏不了你呀  
 026 所以說我用的方式跟你不一樣.我都是用不  
 027 講話的(..)代表我生氣了.  
 028 B 你照這-那:::妳:的意思就是說.以後夫妻都不  
 029 要講話囉?(..)是不是這樣? (2.0)  
 030 P 沒有啊>你就不要理我啊<等到我心情好,我就會自  
 031 己講話啊  
 032 B 妳當我是什麼動物?  
 033 → P 一二三木頭人.不能動  
 034 B @@  
 035 P @@

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

- 024 P: 【You and I- We had a quarrel, right? Ah I cannot win the quarrel.  
 025 So to say I am like-fine, I-fight with you. I can't win.  
 026 so I will use a different way. I will use the no  
 027 talking method (..) which indicates I am angry.  
 028 B: You based on this- then::: you: mean from now on, as a couple, (we) stop talking

029           to each other? (..) Is that so? (2.0)

030           P: No! >You just leave me alone.< Wait until I am in a better mood, I will speak (to you)

031           again.

032           B: What kind of animal do you treat me like?

033   →   P: One, two, three, wooden man, freeze.

034           B: @@

035           P: @@ 】

In extract (95), Elko and Winnie are having a discussion about buying a gift for the wife's mother's birthday. In the first slot, the husband asks Winnie if she has thought of buying something, and Winnie attempts to please her husband, by telling him that she will buy things he can afford. The second slot is the exchange of mutual agreement. The discord begins at the third turn exchange, where Elko suggests Winnie use her own credit card in a joking manner. The wife rejects the suggestion and turns to her husband by addressing him in the third person. Elko continues to make fun of himself by uttering *that is useless*. Winnie plays along and teases him in return. It is interesting to note that when the wife teases him, she distances herself and uses the relationship appellation, "my husband" to address her opponent. The distance provides a safe psychological space for her, from which she can tease or criticise, and she addresses him as a third party. Humour can be used to demean another participants or to voice clear disagreement (Hay, 2000). The negotiation does not achieve conclusion, as Winnie and Elko maintain their own propositions.

(95)

292           E    You want to buy something?

293           W    Well, I want to buy something you↑ can afford↑

294 E Oh, that's good!

295 W ya

296 E So bring your own card (° H)

297 W <No>↑ I am not. (2.0) I'm hoping for my husband.

298 → E Yeah, that's useless.

299 W Ya, my husband <is>, but his card is not↑(4.0)

(Elko 47, Dutch & Winnie 52)

### 6.7.5 *Silence*

Silence, including minimal instances- i.e. pauses, can be used in the management of conflict or negative emotion (Tannen, 1990). As mentioned in Section 2.5.6, couples employ silence to manage the conflict situation to withdraw, change roles, and employ no talk in interaction with their partners (Oduro-Frimpong, 2011). Silence can be used to express negative attitudes to manipulate anxiety, and to demonstrate their own oppression when under threat (Poyotos, 2002). Two examples of lengthy silence are employed in the management of disagreement in the couples' talk.

(96)

159 F 如果我火車有什麼問題的話(.)一樣上班會有問題啦(.)

160 你知道嗎?

161 (2.0)

162 M 能有什麼問題?

163 (6.0)

164 F 「因為」

165 M 「如果」 如果-這樣講(.)載妳去那個-那個土城啊(2.0)帶妳

- 166           去捷運那裡(.)妳要坐那個-坐那個捷運啊(1.5)
- 167       F    沒有! 你如果是像這種颱風(.)啊鐵路沒有開(..)然後你
- 168           開車一樣會塞車
- 169       M    不會吧(.)有很多路可以跑啊
- 170           (1.0)
- 171       F    會-塞車
- 172   →       (32.0)
- (Monsoekser 43, Nigerian & Fiona 40)
- 159       F    【If something goes wrong with my train(.) Going to work is still problematic(.)
- 160           Do you know?
- 161           (2.0)
- 162       M    What kind of problem could there be?
- 163           (6.0)
- 164       F    ┐Because┐
- 165       M    └ If   ┐ If-put it this way(.) (I can) drive you to that-that Xin-dian (2.0) Take you
- 166           to the metro station(.) You can take the-take the metro ah (1.5)
- 167       F: No! If you go in this kind of typhoon, ah the railway stops the service. (..) And then
- 168           you drive, there will still be a traffic jam.
- 169       M: No (.) There are many alternative roads to drive.
- 170           (1.0)
- 171       F: There will be a traffic jam.
- 172   →       (32.0)   】

This example is selected to demonstrate that disagreement engenders the occurrence of silence, and ends without resolution. In extract (96), Monsoekser and Fiona are concerned about how Fiona is going to commute to work on typhoon days. Fiona

proposes that it is better to take the train and then connect to the metro, whereas Monsoekser prefers driving her to the metro station. The discussion begins with Fiona's concern about the problems she may have for commuting. Monsoekser responds with the rhetorical question *What kind of problem could there be?* to show his disagreement. He proposes to drive her to the nearest station, so that Fiona can take the metro to work. His offer is rejected as line 167 shows. Fiona's stance is prefaced by a disagreeing marker *No*, indicating her certainty about the traffic jam, and is followed by the explanation that everyone drives when there are no trains running. The husband contradicts her on account of alternative routes for driving. After a one second pause, Fiona insists on her proposition and restates that there will still be traffic as a conclusion. Then no response from Monsoekser is observed, as a noticeable long silence (32 seconds) is recorded at line 172. The result is similar to withdrawal where the opponents maintain their different stances.

(97)

- 045        Z    你也不要怪你朋友都不借錢給你!>是你自己<搞成今  
046            天這個樣子的 (7.0)
- 047        S    。那妳現在覺得我怎麼樣做?。我知道真的我-這個意  
048            念多,腦筋是已經(.)不曉得是要搞幾個,就跑去搞哪個就  
049            搞哪個,就真的問題一大堆啦!>那妳現在跟我講是<我要  
050            怎麼樣做? (1.0)
- 051        Z    我<不知道>啊!你自己的事情你都不知道!>你什麼事情  
052            你也沒跟我講<,忽然要問我說你應該要怎麼做?我是-  
053            我又不是神!  
054 →        (73.0)

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)



045        Z: 【Don't blame your friends for not lending money to you! >It's you< who are responsible  
 046        for consequences like this today. (7.0)  
 047        S: ◦ Then tell me what to do? ◦ I know really, I- I have lots of ideas.  
 048        My brain is working on so many things at the same time that I don't know which one I  
 049        should deal with first. It really causes lots of problems. > Then tell me now<  
 050        What can I do? (1.0)  
 051        Z: I <don't know>! You don't even have an answer yourself.> You didn't tell me anything <  
 052        (beforehand). Now suddenly you are asking me what you should do?  
 053        I am not God.  
 054 →        (73.0)】

Extracts 97 is selected to demonstrate that silence can be used in a more intense situation, particularly for financial issues. There are two lengthy pauses in this excerpt, one at line 46, and the other at line 54. It demonstrates that the more serious the potential of the disagreement is, the more likely people will choose silence as a strategy (Saunders, 1985). In the episode, the wife argues that Saied should not blame his friends for not lending him money, because he should be responsible for himself. For Saied and Zoe, it seems whenever they have a disagreement, the wife does most of the talking and the husband keeps silent. It can be interpreted through the power relationship between the couple. Saied is always the guilty one who deserves blame, and Zoe is the accuser. After her comment, there is a lengthy pause, which indicates the husband's hesitation (line 46). Saied's response, prefaced by a soft voice, shows he is guilty, and he is at a disadvantaged position in the discord. He admits his flaws and asks for direct suggestions from his wife. Zoe's second turn can be seen as an indirect rejection. She does not have a solution, given that there is no information provided. Her utterances in her second turn can be seen as an accusation. Knowing

that his wife is annoyed and unable to offer help, Saied keeps silent. Saied tends to employ the same strategy when he has to face the music. Silence can be considered a signal of disagreement when the speaker feels what s/he intends to say is undesirable (Lemak, 2012). There is no communication between this couple for nearly one and half minutes, which is the longest silence recorded in the data.

## 6.8 Topic Shift

One third of multilingual couples' disagreement found in the data is resolved through shifting topic. Topic shift can minimise disagreement turns while preserving a state of talk, given that an utterance employs the referents in something unrelated to the prior turn (Maynard, 1980, p. 279-280). It is important to note that participants may retain their oppositional stances if disagreement ends with this type of resolution. Extracts 98 to 125 will demonstrate how multilingual couples shift the topic to distract their opponents, or prevent the disagreement from becoming more intense.

(98/37)

- 870 T 那-這樣我們(.) 何必要把(..)
- 871 它弄成這樣咧?(1.0)
- 872 M >那你何必一定要把那些什麼傳統習俗「什麼有=」
- 873 T 「這個東西」
- 874 M =的沒有的<(. )WHAT?
- 875 → T 妳不是喜歡吃這個?
- 876 M (°h).是沒有錯但是我們倆又不會去買魚

(Maria 38, Italian & Tony 36)

- 870 T: 【L then-so we」(. ) why do we have to

871               make it like this? (1.0)

872         M: >Then why do you have to bring those ꞑ what=ꞑ tradition,

873         T   ꞒThis thingꝓ

874         M: =whatever <(.) WHAT?

875         T: Don't you like to eat this?

876         M: Yes, that's right. But we are not going to buy fish.   】

This episode of Tony and Maria's disagreement over a rice recipe has been shown in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2. Tony is concerned about the recipe on account of the conventional symbol of death in Taiwanese culture, and attempts to convince his wife not to break the taboo. Maria disagrees because it is completely acceptable in their religious beliefs, and attempts to bypass the constraints of traditional Taiwanese conventions by saying that it is not necessary to bring the tradition to their private dinner table. Instead of responding to her question, Tony points at another dish in the recipe book to distract Maria's attention, and asks if that particular dish is one of her favourites. He successfully changes the focus and she continues the new discussion together with him. Tony may still dislike the idea of upside down rice but he does not need to keep discussing the issue for the present moment.

(99)

170 S 趕快趕快

171 (3.0)

172 E 關門吧(4.0)那個>要不要關門那邊<?

173 S <哎呀>

174 (1.0)

175 → E 什麼<哎呀咿呀呀>(SING) NO crossing

176                    area...加油(13.0)

(Eirik 59, Norwegian& Sally 50)

170            S: 【Hurry, hurry up!

171                    (3.0)

172            E: Shut the door. (4.0) That> shall I shut the door on the other side?<

173            S: <AIYA!>

174                    (1.0)

175    →    E: What <aiya-yiyaya.>(SING) NO crossing

176                    area... Add some petrol. (13.0) 】

Extract 99 demonstrates an unusual strategy Eirik employs which is to sing. His humming sound initially is used to mimic his wife's complaint and then he turns it into a melody. Mimicry or prosody is usually performed in irony (Kotthoff, 2009). Sally urges him to leave, and Eirik asks if he needs to close the door on the other side of the van. The wife expresses her impatience by uttering the exclamation token *aiya*, and it inspires the husband to compose a song based on it. Along with code switching, he manages to use the singing as a bridge to switch the topic. It appears that the husband attempts to treat the disagreement as a joke. It can be a means of minimising the discrepancy (Maynard, 1980). In addition, by orienting to humour, it allows participants to return to the topic of disagreement, and re-collaborate toward the resolution in a cheerful atmosphere (Norrick & Spitz, 2008).

The last two excerpts are chosen from Saied and Zoe's negotiation on the topic of finance and moving. During the two month recording, the topic of financial problems recurred many times. As exemplified by Zoe and Saied's conversation in (100), Saied deploys the strategy of changing the focus to mitigate the discord. In the first two

turns, Zoe raises the issue of Saied's poor financial management, and attempts to convince him to let her do the planning. Saied's utterance at line 270 is a self-repair. Instead of claiming "never", he switches to "now". There is a noticeable silence between lines 271 and 272. In response to her accusation, Saied sighs and pauses for two seconds, which indicates his reluctance and then decides to switch the topic to something completely irrelevant. First, Saied admits his weakness and uses it as default to avoid responsibility. In the second turn exchange, Zoe raises her voice to emphasise the challenge. Saied's answer is an indirect one given that he uses three negation expressions instead of a simple "no". Finally Zoe points out the fact that he refuses to provide her with his salary. She makes her request so clearly that Saied must have sensed the pressure. Instead of responding, however, he switches the topic to their son and asks her what thing the baby is holding to distract her. Zoe's answer is in response to his question, and explains where the item is from. The concern for the baby successfully replaces the concern for money. She continues talking about what their children did and the original topic is postponed.

(100)

- 267           Z    你:真的沒有辦法管錢
- 268           S    我沒辦法>我本來就這樣.我剛才就一直<跟你講過啊(1.0)
- 269           Z    沒辦法管錢又不讓我管
- 270           S    我>從來-現在沒有說妳不要<管啊(..)
- 271           Z    問題是(.)你錢都不給我啊(3.0)
- 272    →    S    (SIGH) (2.0)這什麼東西?
- 273           Z    @他從書上撕下來的

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 267           Z:   【You: really cannot manage finance.

268        S: I can't.>I was like that to begin with.< I told you just now (1.0)

269        Z: WHY DON'T YOU LET ME DO THE FAMILY FINANCIAL PLAN IF YOU CAN'T?

270        S: I have never - now told you not to do it

271        Z: The thing is (.) you don't give me your money. (3.0)

272    →   S: (SIGH) (2.0) What is this thing?

273        Z:    @ He tore it from a book.    **】**

Extract (101) serves the purpose of showing how Saied employs the audio recorder as a topic shift strategy to cope with disagreement. The original topic is about what time Saied will come back to help Zoe move. In line 50, Saied mentions that he realises their conversation is being recorded, and he uses it at his last turn to change the topic (line 58). Zoe acknowledges his statement, but continues her question about when Saied will be returning home. The laughter observed in her turns can be seen as a softener in her challenge. It is arguable that her question *How many times do you plan to move?* is a rhetorical question which indicates her dissatisfaction with Saied's answer. As mentioned in Section 2.5.5, it is ambiguous whether the speaker is actually asking for an account or posing a rhetorical question (Egbert & Voge, 2008). Saied treats the question as a genuine one, and replies *seven o'clock*. The main reason for such a request is that Zoe would like his assistance with moving, and confirmation that he will be able to do it the next day. Another rhetorical question is used for challenge here at line 54, where Zoe wonders how much Saied can help with the move, if he returns home as late as he suggests he will. Saied uses non verbal communication to respond to his wife's request as Zoe repeats his answer loudly in return. She is not satisfied with the time he offers, based on the fact that he will not be able to help very much. He promises her he can at least move five rounds, but in Zoe's opinion the estimation is too optimistic. Saied changes the focus to the

recording device on the table, and asks how much it costs. When Zoe explains she did not spend money on purchasing the recorder, Saied has successfully distracted her.

(101)

047 Z 來來來來來

048 S 「來妳說」

049 Z 「還沒」-還沒講完(.)那「你-」什麼時候回來?

050 S 「就是」我的聲音妳也是要

051 錄音交待

052 Z 對un你什麼時候回來? (2.0) @@

053 S 。七點。

054 Z 七點啊huuh? @@@@啊七點是要-回來(..)你要搬幾次?

055 S (0.5)

056 Z 五次?↑我昨天(.)整天(..)從早上到下午(.)我也不過搬

057 了(.)六次(..)你七點回來「你搬五次」

058 → S 「這個多少?」

059 Z 這個不是我買的!

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

047 Z: 【come come come come come

048 S: 「come on have your say」

049 Z: 「Not yet-」haven't finished(.) So 「You-」 when will you come back?

050 S: 「That is」 my voice will also be

051 recorded by you.

052 Z: Yeah, un. When are you coming back? (2.0) @@

053 S: 。 Seven o'clock 。

054 Z: 7 o'clock? huuh? @@@@ ah (if) you come back at 7, (..) How many times do you

055 S (0.5)

056 Z: Five times? ↑ Yesterday(.) the whole day (..), from morning to afternoon, I only

057 manged six times. When you come back at 7, ▮you (want to) move 5 times. ▮

058 → S: ▮How much is it? ▮

059 Z: This is not bought by me. ▮

This chapter describes six formats of resolving multilingual couples' disagreement. More than half of the disagreement episodes end without a resolution. Stand-off, followed by topic shift and submission are the top three formats. The least frequent ones are dominant third-party intervention and withdrawal. Stand-off, topic shift, withdrawal, and dominant third-party intervention lead to the same consequence, wherein couples maintain their opposing positions. Topic shift is frequently used to avoid submission. Compromise does not occur frequently, as the concession offer has to be accepted by the other party. It is noteworthy that there is no physical leave for the withdrawal type as the participants reveal their unwillingness to discuss the issue. Interestingly, dominant third-party intervention occurs mainly due to their children, which contradicts what Vuchinich (1990) has previously argued, namely that a third party has higher power over the participants in family settings. The power relationship between parents and children needs to be reconsidered. Participants deploy a variety of strategies to uphold their stance, which can be found in the section regarding stand-off: Affective act, concession offer being rejected, humour and silence are commonly used strategies to end the disagreement without losing face.



## **7. Chapter 7. Topics, Gender and Cultural Identities in Disagreement**

### **7.1 Introduction**

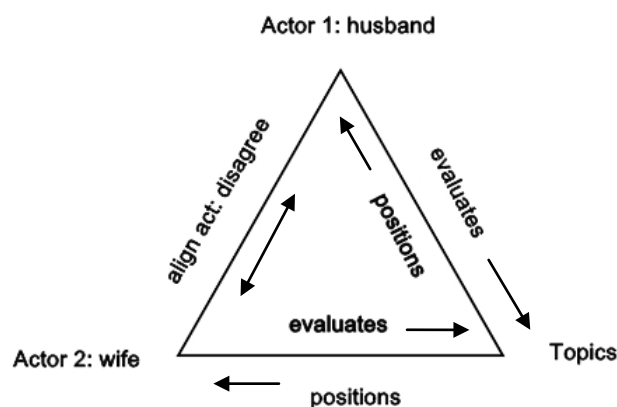
In Chapter 6, I discussed how disagreements are resolved through a variety of discourse strategies in multilingual couples' talk. The present chapter will focus on the gender and identity issues relevant to the same discourse context. It begins with a discussion of the stance triangle, which is then followed by what kinds of trajectories tend to be initiated that eventually lead to oppositional moves. Sections 7.3 and 7.4 link the discourse strategies used in disagreement to the interlocutors' identities, and relate them to gender differences, if there are any, as well as those strategies associated with the participants' various cultural identities.

### **7.2 Stancetaking triangle in couples' disagreement**

In constructing the interaction of diverse stancetaking, I follow Du Bois' (2007) stance triangle as a framework to interpret the process of disagreement between multilingual couples through close observation of their actions in stance-rich environments. The three nodes of the stance triangle include husband (the first actor), wife (the second actor), and the shared disagreement topics. How speakers realise stances and how recipients interpret their situated meanings, can be understood through the key components, namely evaluation, positioning and the alignment of disagreeing. The implicit stance alignment, particularly in the disagreement context, highlights the importance of the dialogue construction of intersubjectivity, the

relations between two actors involved in the conversation (Du Bois, 2007). Figure 7-1 shows the connections between two stances and two stancetakers. For instance, when a husband disagrees with his wife on a certain topic, and positions himself as taking a different stance from his wife's prior evaluation, the interrelations among the couple and the topic establish a triangle, and vice versa. Participants engaging in topics and his or her familiarity with the subject, and with the other interlocutors play an important role in disagreement (Kavaka, 1993). The framework allows analysts to draw inferences through the alignment of discourse, given that the sociocultural value of any stance utterance is shaped by the collaborative acts of the two stancetakers (multilingual couples) in dialogic interaction (Du Bois, 2007). The practices of stancetaking are better understood through the sequential organisation of interaction, and in the activities that participants engage in (Keisanen, 2007).

*Figure 7-1* Couples' oppositional stance triangle



The disagreement is based on the discrepancy in the details observed in the husbands' and wives' stances. Some couples construct relationships where they frequently

disagree, and others where they do not. I have discussed how multilingual couples express different propositions, and evaluate the other party's stance in chapters 4 to 6. The point I would like to stress here is the disagreement topics, the third node in the triangle. But before I move to the topics, it is worth pausing to consider the discord nature of couples' interaction, including their playful manner.

Disagreement can be explicit by using prototypical disagreement sequences, such as "Yes, you did" "No, I didn't" (Kotthoff, 1993; Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). One can see an elaborated form of the prototypical disagreement in two couples' (Tony and Maria, and Winnie and Elko's) conversations below. Examining an elaborated version of the prototypical type in extract (102), Tony's repetitive denial 我沒有 (*I didn't*) displays his oppositional stance (lines 447, 450, 452). In lines 448 and 453, Maria begins her utterances by 有啊, (*yes, you did*), and 有啦, 你有去 (*yes, you did go*) to disagree with him. The affirmative *Yes, you did* contradicts the claim by using the format that retains the *you did go* syntactic structure, and deletes the negative marker *didn't* (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998, p. 231). In these two discord exchange turns, Maria provides evidence to support her opinion by adding more information about the event to remind Tony. Their disagreement actions are delivered in a playful cooperation and Tony submits and agrees with Maria at the end. The noticeable code-switching in Maria's second turn is not used to refer to the same topic, but serves a different purpose for reminding her husband to be careful with the dishes he is washing.

(102)

447 → T: 我沒有-我不記得 𐀀>什麼時候到她那邊去過<barbeque 𐀀

448 → M: 𐀀有啊(.) 你去年不是- 𐀀

449 去: 河邊-幹嘛的

450 → T: 我:沒有去啊(CLATTERING)

451 M: Tony, please!< Be careful>

452 → T: 我沒有去啊.我沒有去到 ㄅ那個河邊ㄅ

453 → M: ㄌ有啦, ㄋ你有去(.)但那

454 天你有去,因為你好像不知道為什麼.好像是去接什麼

455:□ T: ㄅ在河邊barbequeㄅ

456 M: ㄌ對呀,你好像要 ㄋ去機場還是幹嘛的

457 T: <Oh ↑ > right

(Maria 38, Italian & Tony 36)

447 → T: 【I did not. I don't remember ㄅ>when I went there to have a< barbeque. ㄅ

448 → M: ㄌYes, you did. Last year, didn't you ㄋ

449 go to the river side to do something

450 → T: I didn't go. (CLATTERING)

451 M: Tony, please!< Be careful>

452 → T: I didn't go. I didn't go to ㄅ the river side. ㄅ

453 → M: ㄌ Yes, you did ㄋ go. (.) But that day you went is because

454 you seem to, not sure why, it seems that you went to pick up some...

455 T: ㄅbarbeque by the river sideㄅ

456 M: ㄌ Yeah, you probably had to ㄋ go to the airport or something

457 T: <Oh ↑ > right】

(103)

534 W Did you go to one of the boat(s)? I remember

535 → E No, we didn't <go>

536 → W I know, you did! No, you did. you mentioned that to me (1.0)

537 you went to one boat, one from, get off, get on one place and get

538                   it off, I said oh, er, you can, you know? hop back and on.

539           E     I don't remember that was with Harty and Danny that we do this.

540           W     Ya, WITH Harty and Danny (2.0)

(Elko 47, Dutch & Winnie 52)

The same holds for Elko and Winnie's conversation when Winnie attempts to remind Elko about the boat trip he took. The discussion begins with Winnie's question which is denied by Elko. Winnie assumes Elko has taken the trip before, and her utterance can be interpreted as "didn't you go" instead. Elko evaluates the position, and responds *we didn't go*. A similar syntactic structure of contradiction can be found here, where the husband substitutes the pronoun *you* to *we*, and adds the negative marker *didn't* (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). The plural first-person pronoun "we" indicates that his focus is on the previous experience between Winnie and him, whereas Winnie uses "you" as a singular form. Winnie's second turn prefaced by *I know* is an overt disagreement with the acknowledgement of the prior statement related to "we didn't go together". The wife corrects herself by uttering the negation token *no* to emphasise her oppositional stance, and then continues referring to the details of the boat trip to support her proposition. Elko seems to become less certain as he uses the epistemic stance *I don't remember* to express his doubt. Winnie treats his uncertainty as alignment, and also shows her acknowledgement by using an agreeing token *ya*, followed by confirming the name of the company during the boat trip.

The frequent disagreements recorded evidence the playful nature of multilingual couples' talk in interaction. In section 4.3, I discussed the strategies of aggravating and mitigating disagreement. Even in the aggravated disagreement, it is common to see the playful performances at least from one party. Let us re-examine some of the

episodes from extracts 23 to 61 to spell out the playful disagreement. One feature projected for such performance is through laughing. In addition to the situations when humour is employed in the negotiation (46-48), laughter can also be found in Ruby's oppositional turn in excerpt 23, and in those episodes where swearing occurs, such as Pisces in (25) and (35), Gina in (27), excerpts 30, 31 and 32 for Paola, and Fanny's laughter in excerpt 33. Humour can also be employed in an implicitly jocular manner, such as Saied and Zoe's talk regarding his new identification in excerpt 38. Lastly, the topic itself is a non-serious source for disagreement in excerpt 5 for Tony and Maria (spicy dessert), and excerpt 52 for Paola and Bjorn (choosing a blouse). 17 examples (including 3 examples in this chapter) in total display their intimate interaction, which is evidenced through their use of teasing, joking, laughter or other playful means in the sequences of disagreement. Disagreement alone does not equate to dispute even with affection, contradiction, or opposition observed in the disagreement (Leung, 2002). That is not to say conversational disagreement does not involve serious commitment. However, the failure to meet the felicity condition in disagreement between multilingual couples can be acceptable. It is helpful to bear in mind that the playful manner is natural in the couples' disagreement. This kind of interaction between two participants who know they are indulging in play creates solidarity, harmony, and a sense of exclusive intimacy (Chiaro, 2009, p. 214). How disagreements emerge out of opposition and if there are certain subjects more contrary than others in multilingual couples' talk will be discussed in the next section.

### **7.3 Topics of Couples' Disagreement**

Although the source for disagreement varies from couple to couple, some discord is associated with given topics which are shared interculturally. There are certain issues

that couples tend to disagree about more frequently despite the variety of topics. Topics in a conversation are what the talk is about, and are introduced and defined by both participants (Dersley, 1998; Maynard, 2002). In Section 2.5.4, five ways of employing topics have been discussed, including introducing new topics, rejecting, changing, closing the topic, and reopening topics (Myers, 2004). Topic shifts can be used together with other discourse strategies in disagreement, such as humour, CS, apology, and questioning to soften or intensify the disagreement. Who begins the arguable topics seems not to be a crucial point. It can be seen from the data that the discord topics chosen by female participants are 78 out of 120 episodes, whereas the ones initiated by male participants are just above half of that number (42/120). That is not to say that women enjoy disagreement more than men do, because the person who chooses the topic will not necessarily benefit from the disagreement. Some people prefer to leave topic development to others, and to give affective support and agreement. A topic has to be supported and developed further by the other co-participants. If a topic is tailed and accepted, the participant who originally presented the topic gains in status (Watts, 1992). Additionally, when any of the participants possesses the information which other members do not have for the development of a topic, he or she will be in a powerful position. A certain topic is raised by one person, and if it is accepted by the other participant, different strategies will be used to control the topic, including topic shifts (*ibid*). Multilingual couples can employ topic shifts either to mitigate or aggravate disagreement.

One has to bear in mind that topics often overlapped in disagreement. There is a considerable amount of topic sharing going on with one offering support to the other. Atkinson and Heritage have previously argued that topical maintenance and shift is an extremely complex and subtle matter (1984, p. 165). The categories of topic choices

below are not strict and can overlap. For instance, a discussion about hiring a nanny could be both child-related and money-related. In order to present an overall picture of what subjects are more likely to lead to discord talk, the topics of disagreement episodes that occurred more than ten times during the multilingual couples' conversations have been listed below in Figure 7-2.

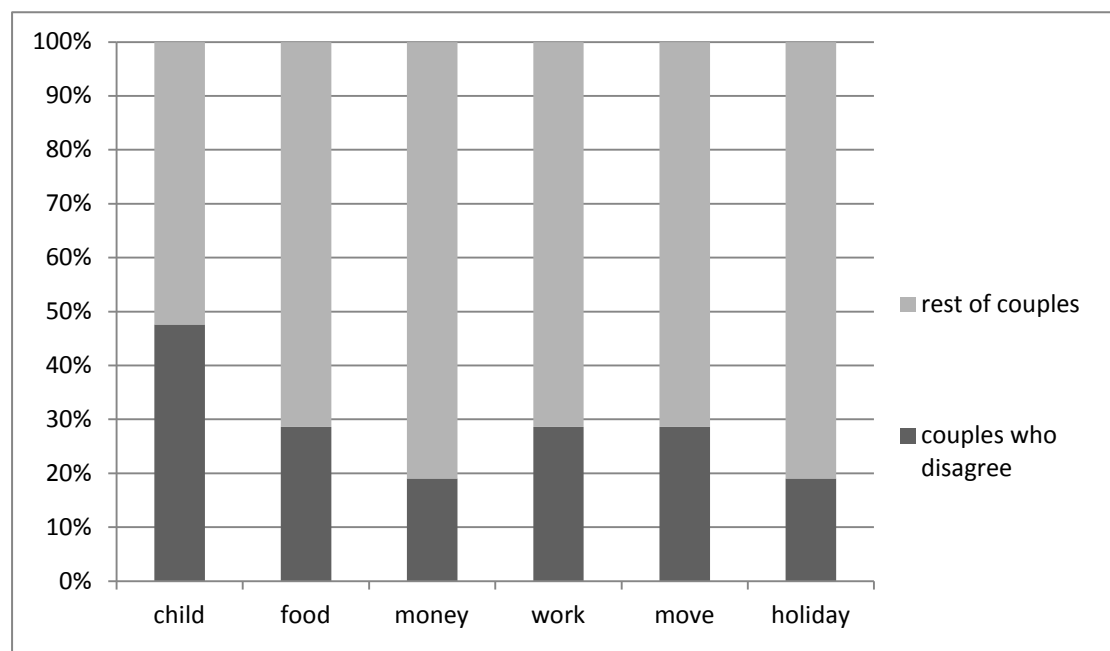


Figure 7-2. Common topics of multilingual couples' disagreement

Number	child	food	money	work	move	holiday
(total)						
couples	10	6	4	6	6	4
(21)	47.62%	28.57%	19.05%	28.57%	28.57%	19.05%
episodes	17	13	14	12	12	10
(120)	14.2%	10.8%	11.7%	10%	10%	8.3%

The low percentage shows how diverse the arguable topics are. The largest number



represented by child-related episodes occur seventeen times in the disagreement. Compared to the rest of the couples, it seems that the number of couples who disagree on certain topics are relatively low. Nevertheless, couples appearing not to have disagreement on one topic might have other issues which they disagree about. For instance, couples who do not have children are less likely to discuss a child-related issue. From the number of participants who have disagreed on child-related subjects, it appears to be the major topic of interest. 10 out of 21 couples (47.62%) have disagreed with each other on these issues, concerning the education, caretaking, birthday celebration, health, pet choices, and teenage relationships. Close to half of the participants have disagreement on topics about their children. Money-related conversation is ranked as the second most frequently arguable topic, which occurs 14 times in the data. Debt, payment, taking or borrowing money from each other, as well as financial management easily generate discord. Thirdly, participants might have different stances when it comes to choosing a restaurant, what to eat, which recipe to follow, or where to get the ingredients. These are categorised as food-related topics. The fourth most frequent topic is work-related issues, followed by moving and holiday plans. Other topics, such as the sharing of housework, driving, friends' invitations, weather and politics are also disagreement sources found in the data. The categories may affect each other. For example, holiday plans, food, and moving can be all highly related to money issues when topics involve the budget.

Some topics are strategically chosen for the purpose of disagreement, whereas other topics are not the focus per se, but the bridge to the actual one. The latter might lead to unexpected disagreement. As mentioned in Chapter 6.8, topic shifts are commonly found in the couples' interaction as a discourse strategy. Whether a topic is arguable or not is highly dependent on individual differences. In the private domain, speakers

tend to approach the topic by addressing their spouses explicitly about unsolved problems with certain factors which predispose the interlocutors to specific perceptions and practices of disagreement (Sifianou, 2012). Data shows that couples return to the prior topic, and continue their disagreement in a number of discord episodes. As Watts has previously noted “topics are frequently shifted, modified or abandoned altogether during the course of the discourse, and there are certain structural features which signal when this happens” (1992, p. 477). A number of discourse strategies are found where the focus of topics is modified or abandoned in disagreement, such as questioning as challenge to signal disagreement (extract 104, 106), apology to project the oppositional stance (105), humour for topic shifts (107), as well as code-switching leading to topic abandonment (108).

Topics plays an important role in disagreement, but are not the determinants of discord talk, as any topic could lead to disagreement, and the disagreeing episode will not necessarily terminate if more topics are introduced into the negotiation. In the following subsections, I will demonstrate three types of topics (children, food, and money) occurring frequently in the data, and then provide one special topic, namely choosing what to talk about as a topic for further discussion.

### **7.3.1      *Child-related Topics***

When child-related topics are labelled as one of the “trivial” issues, it reflects deeply rooted social values about what is important (Yieke, 2007). Among the ten couples who disagree on this topic, it is usually the wives who raise the topic about their children (70% versus 30%). I will provide one example from each gender to demonstrate that the same topic can be raised by both husbands and wives, and

exemplify how the disagreement is maintained. In extract (104), the Nigerian-Taiwanese couple, Monsoekser and Fiona are discussing the time length for hiring a babysitter to take care of their son. The disagreement commences in line 35, where Fiona responds to Monsoekser's question regarding the expense. It was the wife who started the conversation by requesting the opinion of her husband. Both participants agree that they need a babysitter, as observed in the first three turns, yet the couple disagree about the length of time for such employment. Fiona's stand point is that they only need help in the evenings, whereas Monsoekser thinks they will also need a babysitter in the morning. Their negotiation continues for ten minutes, but terminates without consensus, because the husband keeps silent after six and half minutes for the rest of the turns, which can be seen as withdrawal.

(104)

03 → F 你覺得呢?

04 M 我覺得ok

05 F 你覺得ok?

06 M Hm可是(2.0)我-<覺得>如果有辦法

(07-32 omitted)

33 M 應該請人家從早上到晚上送，早上到晚上看-那個錢，

34 如果差-如果沒有差很多

35 F 差很多啊！差當然差很多啊你在「講什麼」

36 M 「那個」，如果

37 我請人家從早上到晚上多少錢？

38 F 很多錢

39 M Hm我說大概多少？

40 F 三萬多塊

- 41 M 不會吧?
- 42 F 三萬多塊
- 43 M 不會吧?
- 44 F 三萬多塊什麼不會吧? 它是四個小時兩百五啊, er 四個
- 45 小時一千塊

(Monsoekser 43, Nigerian & Fiona 40)

- 03 → F: 【What do you think?
- 04 M: I think it is ok.
- 05 F: You think it is ok?
- 06 M: Hm, but (2.0) I <think>, if there is a way

(07-32 omitted)

- 33 M: (We) should hire someone from morning till evening, babysitting from morning to
- 34 evening.-That price, if the (price) difference, if the difference isn't too much.
- 35 F:(It) differs a lot! Of course there's huge (price) difference. What are you ㄟtalking about?ㄟ
- 36 M: ┌that, ┐
- 37 if I hire someone from morning till evening, how much will it cost?
- 38 F: A lot of money.
- 39 M: Hm, I say, roughly about how much?
- 40 F: More than thirty thousand.
- 41 M: No!
- 42 F: More than thirty thousand.
- 43 M: No!
- 44 F: More than thirty thousand! What no? It costs 250 for four hours ah, er, one thousand for
- 45 four hours. ㄱ

The second example is taken from the conversation between Kimura and Tina, the

Japanese-Taiwanese couple, which has been discussed in Section 4.2.3. This time it is the husband who raises the topic regarding their son's future. Kimura begins the discussion by mentioning how lonely parents might feel when their son goes to college, and Tina responds that there are ten more years to go, which indicates it is too early to show his concern. Kimura acknowledges the epistemic stance related to the time length, and shows his agreement by uttering the marker *oh*. Tina repeats some of the words to emphasise her points, which is in line with Tannen's comprehension function of repetition, where the hearer benefits from the redundancy to absorb what has been said (2007). The actual disagreement commences at line 32, where Kimura changes the focus to military service as a solution. Tina shows her disalignment with the fact that their son will be exempt from compulsory military service by the time he grows up. Again, Kimura shifts the topic to a broader scale regarding Taiwan's defence against China. Tina shifts the focus back to their son, suggesting that they send their son to the military academy instead. She successfully convinces her husband that her suggestion can be a solution to address his concern.

(105/16)

- 25 → K 那就再一年就-:。自己自己有的世界了。(3.0)
- 26 T 你<還有十年喔>
- 27 K (HA) ↑ 那麼久(2.0) Oh-
- 28 T 還有十年(2.0)
- 29 K (°H) °我想-(2.0)我想談戀愛的時候.(.)現在的樣子以後
- 30 他上大學也是沒什麼幫助
- 31 (2.0)
- 32 K oh-再看他就-國中畢業可以當兵就先當兵就賺一年「他就」
- 33 T ㄟ很抱歉」他



wh-question from Bjorn. Paola responds by giving an account for her prior claim. Bjorn's question in line 378 indicates his strategic use of disalignment, given that questions that are asked from a position of knowledge convey an assertion about the other interlocutor's stance (Heinemann, 2008). He shows his own opinion in the next turn, where he utters *I think it is quite good*, which can be seen as a mitigated disagreement. In return, Paola's turn is prefaced by an agreeing token *yes* to modify her proposition that she has nothing against the quality of the dish, yet her point is based on the frequency of having to eat the same food. It is considered as partial agreement, which still indicates disagreement, but not a strong one (Pomerantz, 1984). Partial agreement stops the debate at a specific point, and maintains the general controversy (Kotthoff, 1993, p. 210). Bjorn challenges her by questioning Paola *didn't you have chicken every day when you were in Uruguay*. His indication of reference to Paola's nationality can be seen as aggravated disagreement strategy. However, his contradictory example referring to her routine in Uruguay is invalidated by Paola's subsequent clarification that the dish she used to eat daily was actually beef, rather than chicken. The inaccurate information proffered earlier puts Bjorn in a disadvantaged position and he submits for the present disagreement.

(106)

372 → P Oh 這幾天跑去台中(..)<每天>吃那個什麼雞啊？

373 B <土窯雞>

374 P Oh，吃到<怕>了啦！哎↑

375 B 為什麼？

376 P 我-都是那個<雞>@@呀沒有-都是他們的(.)都只

377 是>那個雞就吃到有一點<怕怕>了啦。

378 B 是喔？

379 P 都一樣的,都是做一樣的飯-,一樣的口味這樣子啊

380 B 我感覺蠻好的啊

381 P 是!>我沒有說不好啊<↑>問:題說<你每天吃那個

382 你會-吃到有一點「膩呀」

383 B 「喔,」那妳在 Uruguay 不是天天吃雞?

384 (1.0)

385 P 我吃<牛>!不是吃<雞>

386 B 喔

(Paola 36, Uruguayan & Bjorn 41)

372 → P: 【Oh, we were in Taichung those days (..) What did we eat <every day> the chicken?

What is it called?

373 B: <Earth Oven Chicken>

374 P: Oh, eating too much and it made me< sick>. Ay!

375 B: Why?

376 P: I- (It's) nothing but <chicken>@@without-everything is their (.) it is always> that

377 chicken it makes me feel a little bit < scared

378 B: Oh yeah?

379 P: Always the same. Always the same rice, the same flavour, like that.

380 B: I think it is quite good.

381 P: Yes!> I didn't say it was not good. <↑

382 >The problem is< you eat that every day, you will feel 「tired」

383 B: 「Oh,」but when you were in

Uruguay, didn't you have chicken every day?

384 (1.0)

385 P: I had <beef>, not < chicken>

386 B: Oh. 】



Extract (107) is chosen to demonstrate an example of combining CS, humour and topic shifts in the same disagreement episode. The other example is taken from Tony and Maria's conversation during meal time, as the extract below shows. Maria makes use of a metaphor *are you feeding a pig* for the amount Tony dished for her that is considered to be too much in line 222. Her utterance is prefaced by a first name vocative in Chinese to draw attention. From line 221 to 222, Maria's CS corresponds to the topic focus shifting from the dish to her husband. The metaphor introduces irony to their talk. Tony objects to her claim by correcting her wording *Don't call yourself pig*. In short, when Maria uses "feeding a pig" as a metaphor, she refers to the action, whereas Tony changes the focus to the object "pig" to be sarcastic when he responds. A noticeable laugh from Maria is observed. The employment of humour is successful. Meanwhile, he insists she should eat some more. Tony employs teasing as a mitigated strategy to disagree with Maria. By entering a playful frame, participants create solidarity through the metaphor (Coates, 2007). Tony reiterates *You can say you eat as much as a pig*, where he elaborates what he meant. In reacting to what is said, participants enter a playful frame which creates friendly irony, and frequently involves exploitation of the gap between what is said and what is meant (Kotthoff, 2003). Although there are three consecutive overlapping exchange turns in the discussion, the overt laugh can also be observed. Tony is the one who has actually prepared the dish and Maria has paid her compliments at the beginning of the conversation. This provides the background for Tony's motivation of dishing more food for his wife. After the prior discussion is rejected by Maria, Tony switches the focus to the actual factor for Maria's refusal (line 232). Her admission is evidenced by the agreeing token occurring in Maria's next turn. The disagreement is resolved through Maria's acceptance of her husband's concession offer.

(107)

- 221 → M 這個 chicken curry (1.0) is really good (1.5)
- 222 浩志,你在餵豬嗎? (1.0)
- 223 T 不要自己說自己是豬
- 224 M @@你給我太多了吧你(1.0)
- 225 T 妳再「吃一點」
- 226 M 「你真的」給我<很多>「的#」
- 227 T 「妳可」以說妳吃得像豬一樣多
- 228 M 「@@@@@@@@@」
- 229 T 「但是不要自己稱自己」是豬
- 230 M 這是°什麼 private 對話° @不要再說了>真丟臉<@ (2.5)
- 231 I don't think anything would (.)hm:
- 232 T 妳認為他-我明天會沒得吃
- 233 M @@precisely
- 234 T 明天的事情明天「再說囉」
- 235 M 「Alright then」

(Maria 38, Italian & Tony 36)

- 221 → M: 【This chicken curry (1.0) is really good (1.5)
- 222 Haozhi, are you feeding a pig?
- 223 T: Don't call yourself a pig.
- 224 M: @@You gave me way too much, you (1.0)
- 225 T: 「Have some more」
- 226 M: 「You really」gave me<a lot>「of #」
- 227 T: 「You can」say you eat as much as a pig
- 228 M: 「@@@@@@@@@」
- 229 T: 「But don't call yourself pig」

- 230 M: ° What kind of private conversation is this? ° @ Stop it! I> feel shamed<@ (2.5)
- 231 I don't think anything would (.) hm:
- 232 T: You think he-I will have nothing to eat tomorrow.
- 233 M @@precisely
- 234 T: Tomorrow is another day. (Don't) worry about it 𐀀 till tomorrow𐀁
- 235 M: 𐀀Alright then𐀁 𐀂

### 7.3.3 *Money-related Topics*

19.05% of the couples in my data disagreed on topics regarding their financial issues. More than half of these episodes are from the Pakistani-Taiwanese couple, Saied and Zoe. The negotiation about money can be handled through talk or silence, depending on whether participants view such financial issues as minor or major ones (Oduro-Frimpong, 2011). As mentioned earlier, who should be in charge of the family budget is the topic of the extracts (100). Saied employs indirectness and topic shifts as strategies in the disagreement. The discussion remains inconclusive. Similarly, there is no consensus in the negotiation between Ali and Chin as exemplified in extract (108).

(108)

- 493 A 可是我們可以玩點樂透啊(.)
- 494 說我賺錢就可以-
- 495 C 可是你沒有買樂透啊
- 496 (2.0)
- 497 A (° H) 那妳趕快去外面幫我買
- 498 C 為什麼要-我要幫你買?你>不會去買<?
- 499 A XiaoChin, it's a jo 𐀀ke(.)relax!oh-(° H)妳𐀁



recognised, but not appreciated (Bell, 2009). Their discussion is then interrupted by switching off the recorder as Ali requests a temporary stop.

### 7.3.4 *Choosing Topic as a Topic*

Interestingly, topic itself can be a source for disagreement, when a request or suggestion about a particular discussion is rejected by the co-participant. Topic control, including tabling topics, selecting topics, and ratifying, shifting the perspective or topics, entails interaction for which credit is given to or withheld from participants (Yieke, 2007). Two examples are chosen to demonstrate how this type of disagreement occurs, particularly in situation where the participants show their awareness of being recorded. In extract (109), Ruby attempts to suggest a proper topic to discuss during their dinner, whereas Hamish explicitly expresses his objection to this topic in his turn *I'm eating, ca:n't talk serious*. In this case, there is no delay or hesitation accompanying the disagreement. Rather, Hamish disagrees immediately with the explanation before the negative utterance. He seizes the turn to justify that the reason he cannot talk seriously is due to the fact that he is eating. Their disagreement is based on choosing a topic to discuss for the purpose of recording. Her proposed topic of the general election is rejected, and it seems the couple have different perceptions of whether elections can be considered a serious subject or not. This negotiation terminates in the form of a stand-off.

(109)

304 → R ok, we: say we're going to talk (about) something

305                   serious ɹquickɹ

306       H       (tsk) ɹI'm eatingɹ ca:n't talk serious

Similarly, in excerpt (110), Chin's request for turning on the television is directly rejected by Ali. There is a noticeable three-second silence after the first overlapping turns. Then Chin switches to English to show her concern that she supposes they should continue to talk for the purpose of the recording. Her CS (line 289) is used as a means to contextualise topic change from watching television to the recording of their conversation. It is in line with Li Wei's argument that the speaker's language alternation together with his/her strategic use of the turn-taking mechanism can be a way to shift topics to bring about their language attitude and preference (1998). Ali expresses his oppositional stance in response. After another two exchange turns, Chin employs the same strategy of CS to change the focus with *but-I don't want to waste time. I need to run*, which is contradicted by Ali. His assumption is based on the knowledge of her schedule, and the recording has just been running for seventeen minutes. Ali's counterclaim indicates they are doing what they usually do, and he points out that they had agreed on an hour's length for the recording. Chin's silence can be seen as a sign of submission. After the long silence, Chin starts a new topic to discuss. As Maynard points out "varied topic markers make it possible to express subtleties of the speaker's emotivity towards these topics" (2002, p. 145).

(110)

286 A H°你又來了

【Here you go again】

287 → C @@ 我知道哇,讓我看一下電視一下

【I know, let me watch TV for a while】

288 A 你不要看電視你┐要去##那個#┐



participant deprecates his or her partner's language use in the conversation.

To summarise the main points of my discussion so far, I have presented the third node in the couples' oppositional stance triangle, topics, in terms of the most common issues and two special ones. Let us move the focus back to the two subjects, the first actor, husband, and the second actor, wife. The notion of subject positioning between multilingual couples is particularly useful for gaining an understanding of the disagreement context, given that the couples constantly perform multiple social roles, such as in gender and cultural identities categories (Jackson, 2009).

#### **7.4 Performing Gender in Disagreement**

Undoubtedly, multilingual couples' talk is found to be a highly gendered domain (Piller, 2002, p. 56). Gender is one of the social parameters in interaction which is not limited to the definition of two sexes (Kotthoff & Baron, 2001). A person can act out as a husband, father, employee, scientist, friend, etc. depending on the context. Gender can be one of the identity categories. The semiotics of gender can be traced in the forming and being formed by emotions, ideology and habitual ways to behave (Kotthoff & Baron, 2001). In multilingual couples' strategies in disagreement, whether gender is made relevant and accountable in the discourse will be discussed in this section. I will investigate the strategies mentioned in the previous chapters, including those for maintaining and terminating disagreement strategies, and re-analyse from the perspective of gender differences if there are any.



#### 7.4.1 *Gender Difference of Using Vocatives, Apology and DM well*

*Table 7-1 Use of vocatives in disagreement by gender*

	First names	Endearment terms	Relationship appellations
Male	4	6	5
Female	19	4	9
Total	23	10	14

Generally speaking, females use first names and relationship appellations more frequently than the opposite sex in disagreement, whereas endearment terms are used more often by male participants. The number of first names used by females in disagreement is close to five times higher than males. It reveals individual differences given that the high number of occurrences (19 times) is contributed to by five participants, whereas the rest (16 others) of the female participants do not use this vocative term in negotiation. Moreover, the percentage (68.4%) of whole first names from female users is taken up by the same speaker (Maria). Maria addresses her husband by his first name fifteen times during the one hour recording, and thirteen of them are used in disagreement, which reflects her habitual usage. In addition, to draw attention or to signal the co-participants about the potential disagreement, first names can be perceived as representations of formality on some occasions. In Tannen and Kakava's paper (1992), they argue women use first names as a solidarity marker to mitigate disagreement. In my study, I found that first names used by women can function as an intensifier. The reason for this difference may be that Tannen and Kakava examine the conversations between adolescent siblings or among friends whereas my focus is on couples. Addressing the spouse by their first name in the

negotiation tends to indicate seriousness or undesirableness, especially when the address term is post-positioned. A post-positioned vocative can be used to strengthen anger, and summoning the other interlocutor by name in a sequential-initial position is considered to be a strong form (Lerner, 2003). Females appear to deploy first names as a warning sign to their husbands. On the other hand, husbands use endearment terms more frequently than the wives, albeit the difference is relatively insignificant. The high number of occurrences resulting from the same participant (Ali) can be interpreted as idiosyncrasy. What seems more interesting is that seven out of eight endearment terms, including *honey*, *sweetie*, *baby*, and *amour* are used by foreign spouses, except *darling* which is the only one used by a Taiwanese wife (Gina). This is not to suggest that Taiwanese people are more shy or conservative about expressing their feelings. More investigation is required for the explanation. Interestingly, all the endearment terms occur in English or Spanish. Therefore, vocatives are mostly combined with code-switching for the strategic purpose to mitigate the discord. As for the relation appellations, it reveals a half-half ratio for both genders. The relation appellations recorded are all in Chinese, including 太太, 老婆 (*wife*), 老公 (*husband*), and 爸爸 (*father*), both found in native and non-native speakers' utterances. Occasionally, participants address themselves by the relation appellation as a strategy of temporary association with speaking in the voice of another during the interaction.

Apology as a strategy in disagreement only occurs four times in the data, with one addressed to a third party. Three of them are used by females (Tina, Pisces, and Maria) which have been discussed in Section 4.2.3. Tina uses Chinese whereas Maria and Pisces apologise in English in the disagreement. It can be deemed as an indicator for discord and functions as a mitigated strategy that is only found among female participants. The exception employed by a male occurs in Andy and Pisces'

disagreement and their eldest son shows his objection to his parent's discord. Andy switches to Japanese to apologise to their son. The episode is not included because the apology is used towards a third party, rather than his wife.

The total number of occurrences for the discourse marker, *well*, in the negotiations is sixty-five, constituted of forty-four contributions from the husbands, and twenty-one from the wives (see Table 4-2). As discussed earlier, this marker reflects a highly idiosyncratic factor, given that certain participants are found to use *well* habitually (Gregoire, Ali, Maria, Sophie, and Howard), whereas the DM is not observed in others' utterances. Among the frequent users of *well*, three male and two female participants contribute more than 50% of the total occurrences (38/65). Three of them are non-native English speakers (Gregoire, Maria, and Sophie). It appears that male participants use *well* twice as much compared to female users. DM *well* is usually associated with hedge and indirectness, which are considered to be linguistic features that women tend to employ (Stenström, 1984; Innes, 2010). This contradictory finding suggests more studies are needed in order to investigate whether the current association between gender and indirect strategies is stereotyped.

#### 7.4.2 Gender Difference of Questioning and Swear Word

Table 7-2 Use of questioning and swearing in disagreement by gender

	Questioning	Swearing
Male	18	17
Female	15	14
Total	23	31

Aggravated type of disagreement strategies involve questioning and swear words. For questioning, the difference between husbands and wives is not significant. Male participants use questioning eighteen times which is triple the amount of female users. Both husbands and wives employ challenge as an argumentative tool fairly frequently in the negotiation of their propositions. The gender result of swear words is similar (see Table 7-2). Husbands contribute seventeen times whereas wives' contribution is fourteen. Men swear three times more than women which is not a major difference. It suggests that both men and women might react similarly when they engage in disagreement. It is in line with the argument from previous research (De Klerk, 1997; Bayard & Krishnayya, 2001) that females use a larger number of expletives than the stereotype would have predicted. However, the swear words found in female participants tend to be mild ones, such as the interjections (狗屁, 屁) and religious oaths (*God, for God's sake*) occupy 64.2% (9/14) of the total female swearing recorded. On the other hand, male users are found to favour stronger swear words (*fuck, 媽的*) and expletive slot fillers (*bloody, fucking*) more. There are female participants who use strong swear words in both their L1 and L2 (Fanny, Tiffany). Despite the fact that those less strong swear words are found to be used by females more frequently, there are exceptions of two *God* utterances from a male participant (Ali). Again, the individual difference needs to be taken into account. Additionally, swearing in a second or third language plays an interesting role in the disagreement. First of all, the person who swears might not use it in the same way as native speakers. Secondly, recipients who perceive the swear word in his or her second language might feel emotionally different. For instance, the response of Ken when he hears Fanny swearing is laughing (excerpt 33). The same holds for Fanny's reaction to Ken's swear words (excerpt 34). Swearing in multilingual couples' disagreement talk does not serve the same function as they normally would, which is to express anger

aggressively. Bjorn's reaction towards his wife's swearing is worth noting. He swears much more frequently and uses stronger swear words himself. When Paola swears *Æ* (*farting*), he repeats the word and indirectly instructs her that she should not swear through observing that women should behave politely. The husband in this case possesses a double standard for language behaviour between men and women. His attitude reveals the social aspects constructed on the basis of gender.

#### **7.4.3      *Gender Difference of Disagreement Resolution***

As for resolution, the number of occurrences of the six formats used by husbands and wives is shown in Table 7-3. The results of multilingual couples' disagreement present a similar pattern as Vuchinich's cross generation family conflict. Multilingual couples have more readily available devices at hand to deal with disagreement. Firstly, it is noteworthy that the destructive format of terminating a disagreement – withdrawal, is only found in male speakers. Secondly, both husbands and wives seem not to be keen to offer compromise given the small number of occurrences and there is merely no difference between the sexes. Nine concession offers are provided by male participants which is not much higher in comparison with female contributions. Thirdly, women tend to accept other's intervention more easily, in this case, from their children, but the scale is too small to draw a conclusion along gender differences. The total occurrence of submission is thirty times (25%), including the husbands' seventeen times and the wives' thirteen times, which indicates the couples yield their propositions one in four disagreements. The ratio is higher than the submission found in the cross generation family in Vuchinich's study. Husbands submitting to their opponents appear to be more than the wives, albeit not considerably.

Table 7-3 Resolution of disagreement by gender

	Topic shift	Stand-off	Withdrawal	Submission	3rd-party intervention	Compromise
Male	12	37	3	17	1	9
Female	13	29	0	13	3	8
<i>Total</i>	25	66	3	30	4	17

The last and most common termination format of disagreement for multilingual couples, stand-off, results from different strategies of maintaining one's own propositions. Table 7-4 below shows six approaches employed by the participants for not submitting to their interlocutors.

Table 7-4 Strategies of maintaining oppositions by gender

Strategies (N)	Husband	Wife
Topic shift (21+19)	Bjorn3, Saied 5, Tony3	Paola3, Zoe2, Maria2
	Ken2, Steven2, Elko1	Fanny2, Gina1, Winnie1
	Monsoekser2, Howard1	Fiona1, Tiffany1, Ayi2
	Vladimir2	Sally2, Ruby1, Kate1
Silence (12+4)	Saied 4, Tony3, Elko1	Gina1, Fiona1, Sally1
	Eirik2, Andy1, Ali1	Ruby1
Humour (2+2)	Steven1, Elko1	Paola1, Fanny1
Affective act (1+1)	Saied1	Paola1
Reject concession (1)		Zoe1
Singing (1)	Eirik1	

Multilingual couples tend to distract their spouses in the management of disagreement through changing the topic, laughing, singing, and affective action. Alternatively, they employ silence as a strategy instead of submitting. When one party is ready to compromise and offers concession, it is still possible to resolve the negotiation in stand-off, if the offer is rejected. Such rejection occurs once in Zoe's response (excerpt 100). No difference between men and women's strategies is found in affective act and humour, where the couples attempt to maintain opposition. Affective act is used twice, equally contributed by the two sexes, from the Pakistani husband (Saied) and the Uruguayan wife (Paola), but not found among Taiwanese participants. The use of humour occurs four times, which occurs once in Dutch (Elko) and British husbands (Steven), and Uruguayan (Paola) and Taiwanese (Fanny) wives respectively. Both affective act and humour serve the function of distraction, so does the change of topic or focus of discord. The most popular strategy is topic shift with the overall occurrence of forty where male participants use it three times more than female users, which does not count as statistically significant. So far, the table of speech acts above, including topic shift, affective act, and the use of humour, shows that males and females deploy similar strategic devices in maintaining oppositional propositions. Women appear to use affective stances in disagreement whereas the occurrence of epistemic stances is found more frequently in men. However, in most of the cases, couples employ a mix of affective and epistemic stances in their turns. There is not much difference in the mixed stances. The only considerable distinction appears in the use of silence. Husbands choose silent style four times more often than wives according to the data. Silence as a component of interaction, can be used as admission of guilt (Saied), emotional expressions (Ali, Sally) or to avoid discord (Tony). This finding ties in with what Tannen (1990) found in her study, concerning the fact that the more potentially divisive the disagreement is, the more likely silence is used (p.

276). A variety of perceptions from both genders can be found in the examples given above. However, one needs to bear in mind that there are more individual differences than the gender influence when multilingual couples engage in identity play.

## 7.5 Identities in Disagreement

Social identities, as one of the subject positions, are associated with particular kinds of stances habitually and conventionally (Jaffe, 2009). Disagreeing type of activities are projected and recognised by couples, and their discourse identities emerge as a feature of sequential organisation in their conversations (Zimmerman, 1998). The construction of identity in conversation can shape and be shaped by talk to negotiate sameness and difference. Social grouping, such as nationality, native/non-native speakers and gender, are the result of identity work in interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Participants employ the concept of nationality to mark group boundaries, to challenge and reinforce their ethnicity and race (Cashman, 2008, p. 292). The reference to nationality as a mitigated or aggravated strategy to sustain the oppositional stances is summarised in the table below.

*Table 7-5 National identities in disagreement*

Reference	No. of Occurrences	User's Gender
台灣人(Taiwanese)	10	M6 (Ali, Saied X4, Monsoekser), F4 (Chin X2, Fiona, Zoe)



台灣女孩子		
(Taiwanese girl)	2	F (Paola), M (Bjorn)
Uruguay	1	M(Bjorn)
巴基斯坦人(Pakistani)	3	F (Zoe)
外國人(foreigner)	2	F (Chin, Paola)
British	2	F (Tiffany)
* Christian	1	F (Maria)
Total	21	F13 M8

\* This is a reference to religious identity.

In general, there are twenty-one references to nationality used in the negotiation, and thirteen times are from the wives. Females tend to employ nationality as a strategy either to exclude themselves (Zoe in extract 43), or to exclude their husbands (Chin in extract 45). Identifying themselves as Taiwanese people indicates the participants attempt to be socially compatible with other members in the country. On the other hand, national identity can be used to draw a line between “we” and “they” as semiotic indexicality. Taking up particular positions in discourse can position the interlocutor as “other” (Baynham, 2006). Saied asks his wife if he will be considered a Taiwanese citizen after he received his identification card (extract 38). Ali, on the other hand, challenges Chin about why she opposes other Taiwanese people who would accept to live with their parents in law (extract 45). Similarly, Tiffany and Zoe also generalise about their partners’ actions as being representative of their compatriots’ behaviour. Tiffany criticises Howard’s complaint about the weather even when “it is gorgeous” and characterises his comments as typical British moaning (extract 40). The same holds true for Zoe where she considers her husband’s late-night

arrival as being part of Pakistani culture, which is more acceptable in his country of origin (extract 43). Chin distinguishes her mother in law from “we Taiwanese people” and describes her as a foreigner, even a stranger to her (extract 45). The references to nationality used by multilingual couples is a highly deliberate and self-aware performance in the disagreement. Identities are indeed performed and played out regularly in discourse (Butler, 1997).

Apart from indexicality of nationality, identities can be a topic representing ideology which involves different cultural practices. Extract 111 concerning whether physical appearance should be part of identification is discussed in Zoe and Saied’s conversation. The couple disagree with each other about the photograph used on the identification card. Zoe expresses her epistemic stance regarding the regulations which includes the beard on a man’s face. Saied shows his oppositional proposition by uttering a wh-question. His challenge *why didn't you tell me* at line 36, acknowledging Zoe’s proposition, indicates the change of his certainty towards the regulation. In response, the extra information provided by Zoe regarding the fact that Saied’s appearance is different from month to month based on his beard is evidence she had not mentioned it to Saied in advance. On the other hand, the participant also shows her uncertainty over which appearance represents her husband better. It is more common for males to shave in Taiwan, whereas in Pakistan men tend to keep their beard for religion reasons. Saied regrets that he should have shaved before the identification photograph was taken, which affirms his belief about being more Taiwanese. His attempt to adapt his appearance is parallel to his affiliation to Taiwanese culture. Identity construction can be understood in discourse from a relational perspective involving “what we are” as much as “what we are not” (Baynham, 2006, p. 395). In the end, he downplays the importance of the beard as

part of his physical appearance in order to compromise. In reality, ethnic identities may be eliminated due to situations involving the de-ethnicisation of citizenship under nationalism (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). In this sense, Saied has to give up his Pakistani identification and also struggles to win an equal status in the cultural contract.

(111)

- 31           Z    他們是-他們有規定啊(.)就是-原本就是留鬍子的人  
32                    你就是要留鬍子照(COUGH)  
33           S    「哪有?」  
34           Z    「就是」(.)有啊(.)現在(.)現在身份證的照片很嚴格  
35                    (2.0)  
36           S    那你沒有講?  
37           Z    我怎麼<知道>?(..)因為你-常常一個月留-有鬍子一個  
38                    月沒有鬍子啊 @@我怎麼「知道」  
39           S    「如果」我先知道我就  
40                    先刮鬍子再(..)哎那個反正沒有什麼

(Saied 40, Pakistani & Zoe 36)

- 31           Z: They are-they have regulations that-if you have a beard, you have to keep the beard  
32                    when you take the photo. (COUGH)  
33           S: 「Since when?」  
34           Z: 「That was (..)」yes.( ) Now (.) Right now the rules for the ID photo are very restrict  
35                    (2.0)  
36           S: Then why didn't you tell me?  
37           Z: How would <I know?> (..) Because you- often keep a beard for one month-another  
38                    month you don't@@ How would I「know」?  
39           S:    「If        」I knew in advance, I would have

## 7.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have shown the statistics as well as qualitative analysis in terms of common topics and gender differences in the multilingual couples' disagreement. Arguable topics are diverse and strategically selected by participants and topic shift is used frequently in the same conversation. Issues related to children appear to rank as the highest disagreeing topic for those who are parents. Two unusual discord examples demonstrate negotiation between multilingual couples: rectifying the other party's language use, and choosing a proper subject to discuss. Particular attention is then paid to data resulting from two social parameters, gender and cultural identities in the multilingual couples' talk in interaction. Apology is only observed in female participants, whereas withdrawal is only found in male users. However, the samples are relatively small. There are no significant differences between husbands and wives' usage of questioning and swear words, nor between most of the resolution strategies. On the one hand, male participants are found to be the main users of the indirect means, specifically the DM *well*. On the other, the overwhelming occurrence of females using references to nationality, or first name vocatives do not imply that women have stronger semiotic indexicality, given that the employment of strategies are highly idiosyncratic. The same holds true for the more frequent use of silence found in men's strategies. To conclude, while gender and cultural identities can indeed be significant during the interaction in multilingual couples' disagreement, these factors are not always necessarily decisive or even relevant.

## **8. Chapter 8. Conclusions**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This thesis has sought to contribute to research on multilingual couples' disagreement in relation to stancetaking (Piller, 2002; Kakava, 2002; Jaffe, 2009) to explore how different discourse strategies can function to mitigate or aggravate the contention. Existing studies in this area appear to have a number of gaps. Firstly, the methodologies employed are limited. As such, questionnaires and interviews are widely accepted, rather than naturally occurring conversations. Secondly, there is a gap in linguistic studies of family interaction and couplehood, on account of the hitherto almost exclusive focus on children. Furthermore, the work on linguistic practices during disagreement remains far from sufficient. The third reason for the significance of the current thesis is that I have introduced the concept of stancetaking as a framework for the analysis of multilingual couples' interaction.

In the Introduction, I propose two questions regarding how multilingual, intercultural couples express their oppositional stances in a way that will cultivate intimate relationship, and by what means participants are able to do so. The empirical findings are examined in the following section, and provide evidence about how the objectives are achieved, and how research questions are answered. This final chapter will first summarise the main argument of this study, and underscore its significance in light of previous research concerning bi/multilingual speakers' disagreement and discourse strategies in oppositional stance-taking. In Section 8.2 the contribution and implications of this thesis will be presented. Finally, I will outline the limitations of

this study and provide suggestions for future research in Section 8.3.

## **8.2 Summary of Findings and Arguments**

Chapter 2 deals with the pertinent literature in studying bilingual couples and disagreement, for the purpose of outlining how the research questions set forth in Chapter 1 will be addressed. I especially discuss, the theories of stance-taking and discourse strategies in disagreement contexts. In Chapter 3, the methodology is described for the issues concerning how to obtain naturally occurring daily conversations from the targeted couples, and the challenges of transcribing. Chapter 3 also provides the participants' biographical information. The analytical focus of this study is then presented in detail through Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7. Chapter 4 begins with the strategies used to project the discord, and then moves on to the discussion of how multilingual couples sustain the oppositional stances by mitigating or aggravating strategies. In Chapter 5, the focus is on how code-switching can be used in affective and epistemic stances in disagreement contexts. Chapter 6 then analyses the strategies used to resolve the discord. Lastly, I discuss the common disagreeing topics and two social parameters, namely gender and cultural identities in Chapter 7.

### **8.2.1 *Results of the Study***

This thesis has been an exploration of multilingual couples' disagreement talk, which contradicts many presuppositions against stereotypes concerning language use and discourse strategies. It has been shown that disagreement strategies are highly idiosyncratic selections, from their language choice to the way couples disagree with each other (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Tannen, 2007).

The analysis of the data reveals several separate, but related issues. First, multilingual couples have various sets of strategies at hand to indicate, mitigate, aggravate and resolve their disagreement. Therefore, the interaction in disagreement does not necessarily result in damage of their intimate relationship. Du Bois' (2007) stance-taking triangle provides an analytical tool to treat and interpret the disagreement acts manifested on the linguistic level, and identifiable through discourse analysis. The analysis is based on sequences where disagreement is related to how couples' oppositional stances are sustained. They are observable given that disagreement consists of at least three contradictory turns (Chapter 2). One of the most noticeable phenomena in this study is the couples' display of their playful attitude in the bilingual repertoire of disagreement through code-switching, vocative terms, swearing, teasing and referring to their national identities which are all deployed to manage the discord. Secondly, the interethnic setting of the collected conversations provides examples of a different application of linguistic practices linked to native and non-native speakers. The differences can be found in the participants' strategic use of vocatives, discourse markers, and swear words when expressing oppositional stances. On the basis of the empirical evidence provided, I provide answers for the research questions as follows:

(1). How multilingual couples from different cultures disagree in a way that will cultivate, or at least not damage their relationship?

a. The proportion of cases that transfer from disagreement to conflict is significantly small, despite the fact that nearly all couples in the study appear to disagree with their spouse frequently.

- b. The majority of multilingual couples treat oppositional stances as a norm which highlights their intimacy and a sincere self.
- c. Many of the disagreement episodes end with no resolution; nevertheless, this cannot be taken as an indication of conflict.

(2). What means can multilingual couples employ to negotiate oppositional stances?

- a. Code-switching, topic shift, questioning, humour, vocatives, and indirectness are common strategies that are used by multilingual couples. Nearly all the discourse strategies can be employed either to aggravate or mitigate disagreement. Participants show different strategic skills in handling the disagreement discourse, and the ability to express one's attitude to the content of one's own and the interlocutor's oppositions.
- b. Cultural differences, language proficiency, or national identity can be factors that occur in disagreement topics, but not the main trigger for disagreement. Intercultural interaction needs to be examined under contextual and indexical principles.

### **8.2.2 Findings and Arguments**

How these strategies function is highly context dependent, and up to personal choices during the interaction, as exemplified in Chapter 4. One of the strategies to signal their spouses the upcoming disagreement is through vocatives. Potential discord can also be predicted through complaints, discourse markers, apology, *etc.*, together with other linguistic features, such as intonation contours. Multilingual background allows couples to change addressing terms in a choice of different languages according to their mood. First names, including translated versions and English names, and



relationship appellations mainly function as indicators of undesirable stances, whereas endearment terms are used to soften the disagreement more frequently. Apology, complaint, and the DM *well* also serve a similar function of projecting the discord. The main findings in Chapter 4 include multilingual couples' management of oppositional stances, which are equally divided into mitigated and aggravated strategies. Couples are found to favour aggravating the disagreement in a playful manner, yet the participants also employ softeners when the negotiation becomes heated. The same can be inferred from the use of humour in Chiaro's (2009) and Norrick and Spitz's (2008) studies. There are episodes wherein couples encourage their spouses to use aggravated strategies to maintain the opposite propositions once the disagreement context has been established. Six extracts (23-28) are chosen to demonstrate questioning as an aggravated disagreement strategy. Nine extracts (29-37) expose how swear words are used as interjections, emphasisers, or expletive slot fillers to express the participants' emotion in the disagreement context. It reveals an interesting aspect from a multilingual perspective, as the other interlocutors respond with laughter after hearing the swear words in a different language, which indicates that the emotional weight of swear words do not have the same impact on non-native users. In Dewaele's (2004) findings, he indicates that there are positive correlations between perceptions of emotional force and the frequency of using swear words, and the stronger the emotion, the more likely for it to be used in the participants' L1. In my study, as described in Section 4.3.2, I found that it is true for most of cases. References to nationality can be either aggravated or mitigated strategies according to the interaction, as exemplified by the five extracts (38-42) for the former; 43-45 for the later). Three other strategies observed in the data for the purpose of softening the negotiation are humour (46-48), vocatives (49-51), and indirectness (52-53). The aggravated or mitigated strategies are employed, but do not assure the goal will be

successfully achieved. A contrasting stance tends to be natural and highly acceptable in couplehood, as being direct can be a signal of intimacy, and also indicate they are able to maintain a sincere self. It is in line with Kao's argument that the willingness to use aggravated and direct disagreement strategies indicates the participants' intimate relationship, and also shows the desire for maintaining a sincere self (1992). Multilingual couples are capable of finding ways to mitigate the discord, and thus tend not to avoid confronting the other interlocutor's propositions.

In Chapter 5, I discussed language choices and demonstrated how the couples use code switches to highlight their affective or epistemic stances. Code-switching is the most common strategy occurring in multilingual couples' disagreement to achieve their communicative goal in negotiation, both at intra-sentence and inter sentence level. The contrast between two languages adds an extra layer of meaning to the opposite exchanges. Be it their L1, L2 or L3, multilingual speakers can use different languages to reiterate the same utterance in order to highlight its importance. By switching from one language to another at specific sequential constructions, participants create the climax of an argumentative discourse based on the juxtaposition of the codes. This is consistent with findings presented by Cromdal (2004) that bilingual children use CS as a means to contextualise oppositional actions. When the switch occurs along with other contextualisation cues, such as discourse markers, noticeable pause, elongated voice, raised intonation or change in tempo, it strengthens the salience of their stance-taking twice (*ibid*). There is no certain code-switching appropriate for specific speech acts in multilingual couples' conversation, due to the complex nature of the switch. The same code may be used for diverse purposes by the same speaker in one CS episode. Participants frequently use code-switching in conjunction with amending their propositions to emphasise the

viewpoints they make, either to mitigate or to aggravate the disagreement.

There is no fixed language choice for multilingual couples. It changes along with the country where they stay. As exemplified by the spouses who have immigrated to Taiwan, John and Paola, they used to speak English/Spanish to their partners when they were in England/ Uruguay, and now they switch to Chinese or a mixed code. Habitual factor is also crucial for multilingual speakers when it comes to choosing languages. Eirik and Sally communicate in German (main), Chinese, and English given that they first met in Germany and they have stayed with the habit. The same holds for Gregoire and Sophie, and Elko and Winnie, whose code is also a third language. German and English are used as a lingua franca. The linguistic competence is not a main criterion for multilingual couples' code choice as Frabice and Kate demonstrate. The communication is not subjected to their low proficiency in English, and does not affect argument. On the other hand, the factors that trigger participants to use a different language are social networks, such as work, kinship, *etc.* or intrapersonal reasons, *i.e.* identity and emotion. Saied, for instance, makes a great effort to fit in and wants to be treated as a Taiwanese national, rather than Pakistani. Intermarriage itself as an incentive to learn a new language is not a strong factor. Tom's language choice provides an extreme example of self-confidence. He refuses to speak Chinese to his wife due to his low confidence, despite the fact that he has learned the language for a decade, and still attends regular lessons. According to Tom, the situation may change after their first child is born. It is the language which facilitates communication in the intermarriage. Other inter-personal factors, such as on account of their spouse, parents in law, or work, also play a role in language options for participants. At no stage was it assumed that multilinguals make their language choices by one factor only as Auer (1998) mentions adult bilinguals may

account for different languages in a complex way.

The main argument in Chapter 6 is that multilingual couples favour terminating the disagreement without resolution (60.83%), which indicates that oppositional stances are maintained. Participants manage their opposite propositions by virtue of diverse strategies available, such as affective acts, rejecting concession offers, humour and silence, to avoid submitting. Topic shifts and stand-off are the most common resolutions found in multilingual couples' disagreement. One of four disagreements resolves in the form of submission to maintain the harmony. It is in line with Vuchinich's findings (1990) regarding high frequency of stand-off termination in family conflict and one in four conflicts ending with submission. Compromise does not take place frequently, yet it can end the disagreement when couples settle their oppositional stances by mutual concession. The least frequent formats of resolving discord are dominant third-party intervention and withdrawal. Interestingly, the dominant third-party intervention occurs mainly due to their children's contribution. Three episodes in the corpus are found ending in withdrawal, and this most destructive type of termination is only found in husbands, who withdrew from the negotiation through silence or switching off the recorder.

The final chapter draws on links between discourse strategies and topics, gender and cultural identities in the interaction. In spite of the fact that more than half of the disagreeing topics were initiated by wives, the person who chooses the topic does not necessarily benefit from the negotiation. The participants reveal diverse selections of topics for disagreement, and the categories of topics are overlapping and changeable. For those who have children, child-related issues are the most common topic to raise in disagreement. Some topics are strategically chosen as a bridge to a real issue. In

contrast to previous research (Piller, 2002), language choice itself does not lead to disagreement in my data. However, rectifying the other spouse's language use is found to be an interesting topic for multilingual couples. Another unusual topic concerns what subject to discuss, which reveals non-alignment in the corpus. Gender differences and cultural identities are indeed significant in the interaction between multilingual couples' disagreement, but are not always relevant. In overall disagreement strategies, there are no significant differences between husbands and wives' usages of questioning and swear words, nor between most of the terminating strategies. Apology is only found in female participants' utterances, whereas male users are the main contributors for the discourse marker *well* and silence in the disagreement. In vocatives, female participants use more conventional appellations and their husband's first names to gain attention, or indicate their discontent. Epithets are found to be employed more often by non-Taiwanese spouses to soften the disagreement. The use of swear words between the two sexes reveal similarities in terms of number of occurrences, yet women's choice of words in swearing is less strong. Participants also construct their identities by affiliating themselves with a particular culture in the discourse. It is worth noting that the employment of strategies is highly idiosyncratic. The individual factors, such as habitual behaviour and personal history, certainly need to be taken into account.

### 8.2.3 *Codes in Oppositional Stance-taking*

Emotional intensity connected to a certain language makes it relevant for bilingual affective stances. I have demonstrated how code-switching as a powerful strategy can be used to explicitly highlight both affective and epistemic stances in multilingual couples' disagreement (Chapter 5). The switches between different codes, in concert

with the significance of particular stance-taking, add an extra layer to the contrast of oppositional propositions. When combining the code with addressing terms, it can also indicate the intimacy relationship between the interlocutors. Let us review three couples' stance-taking in comparison with their language choices.

The first couple in Table 8-1 reveals the two codes Fanny alters for different stances. Fanny prefers to use her first language, Chinese, to express epistemic stances, especially in conjunction with negative attitudes, whereas her husband, Ken uses Chinese both for his affective and epistemic stances. She switches to English for the expression of affective stances to emphasise her surprise. The second example is taken from Steven and Gina to show a mixed code choice (Table 8-2). It results from the fact that the couple code switch between Chinese and English frequently in their conversation. Steven is observed to favour expressing his emotions in Chinese. Thirdly, Maria's language choice provides an exceptional case for using her L3 to express affective stances. When expressing her epistemic propositions, Maria shows her mixed codes of both English and her L1 Chinese. On the other hand, her husband, Tony reveals a stable choice for expressing both stances in his mother tongue, Chinese as seen in Table 8-3.

*Table 8-1* Couples' stances and code choices (1)

Stance\ Code choice	Fanny	Ken
affective	English	Chinese
epistemic	Chinese	Chinese, English

*Table 8-2 Couples' stances and code choices (2)*

Stance\ Code choice	Steven	Gina
affective	Chinese	Chinese, English
epistemic	Chinese, English	Chinese, English

*Table 8-3 Couples' stances and code choices (3)*

Stance\ Code choice	Maria	Tony
affective	English	Chinese
epistemic	English, Chinese	Chinese

The three examples above provide evidence that the relationship between languages and stancetaking is by no means a “one code to one stance” association. Participants reveal a variety of codes in concert with their different stances. It falls nicely with the interactional approach which is ascribed to social and cultural context and individual rational decisions. Language preferences in disagreement are locally constructed (Li, 1998). Chapter 5 argued against the assumptions of “one mixed code, one medium” and “code-switching as the unmarked choice” which overlooks the complexity of the talk in interaction.

### **8.3 Contributions and Implications**

This thesis has made contributions to bridge the gap between disagreement and multilingual intercultural couplehood research in sociolinguistic studies. The

theoretical value is built on offering an alternative to categorising discourse strategies employed in three stages of disagreement procedure under the framework of stancetaking to investigate how disagreement begins, maintains and ends. The key concept of stance from a sociolinguistic perspective is introduced to theorise the relationship between stancetaking acts and disagreement in multilingual couples' interaction. In this regard, this study is highly original and significant. Furthermore, most research of bilingual communities employs either participant observation, interview or questionnaire as methods of data collection (Codó, 2008; Lanza, 2008), which have constrained the questions that can be addressed. I have incorporated the naturally-occurring conversations with written transcriptions to establish a corpus for extension of the current database. I suggest a friend-of-a-friend connection to gain access to the participants, and recording without the researcher's presence as a means to obtain controversial data. This method certainly merits future investigation especially in connection with studies concerning couplehood.

This study does carry several implications, concerning both the empirical and theoretical aspects. First of all, it contributes to interactional sociolinguistics analysis, by providing new data and demonstrating stance-taking as an analytical tool for bi/multilingual conversation. The stance-based approach (Jaffe, 2009) and stance triangle (Du Bois, 2007) can be employed to explore how participants draw on linguistic resources and repertoires to signal their oppositions. The findings contradict the assumption that language proficiency is the determinant for disagreement of multilingual couples. Disagreement conversations between couples are presented as cooperative activities characterised by a playful nature to maintain intimacy. In the same vein, the findings support previous research, with regard to why direct and aggravated strategies are commonly used in disagreement, and that management of



oppositional stances can be enjoyable (Schiffrin, 1987; Kao, 1992; Kakava, 2002; Chiaro, 2009). In addition, this study evidences the language preference is locally constructed by the sequential analysis of interaction, rather than assumed. It supports Auer's (2002) and Li's (2005) argument, which ascribes the motivation of selecting languages to individual decisions. How code-switching and the perceptions of different languages play an important role in negotiating disagreement has been demonstrated. The implication points back to the assumptions that first languages are the most emotional ones for expressing anger and emotion perceptions of non mother tongue are relatively less strong (Dewaele, 2010). This is exemplified by participants who show the tendency of choosing their first language as the priority to swear. Those who show a different preference of languages for emotion are not subject to the first language base. It applies to couples who use a third language as a lingua franca and participants' habitual behaviours. In relation to the practical applications, I have shown that intercultural communication can be successfully managed through discourse strategies to shed light on an alternative understanding of communication breakdown observable in intercultural encounters. With respect to the growing number of international marriage settlement in the UK and Taiwan, the study provides valuable examples of intercultural communication management. It shows the considerable variations from socio-linguistic perspectives, given that the negotiation of different opinions between multilingual couples is closely associated with social factors, including gender and cultural identities for example.

#### **8.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Although this study has offered insight into multilingual couples' strategies in disagreement talk from a sociolinguistic perspective, there are several issues that

could not be addressed in this study. First, I have been concerned with the linguistic practices associated with a particular subset of multilingual couples' conversation disagreement, and in the case of Taiwanese-foreign spouses. Due to the multilingual background setting, the participants show a variety of code patterns in the disagreement context. As Cashman (2008) points out, transcribing bilingual conversations is difficult, given that language varieties do not share the same writing system, and there are also ideological challenges. That is even more so as there are at least eight different languages involved in this study. The interpretation of conversations in languages other than Chinese or English is limited by the researcher's linguistic knowledge, and thus the analysis relies on the English translations carried out by my colleagues and friends. It also reflects the limitations on literature in other languages that I am able to review. The data on multilingual couples in this study cannot represent generalised patterns in any language, due to the limited number of language users selected. Additional consultation with native speakers or follow-up interviews with participants might provide further insights in order to handle the data more accurately, if the researcher is not a native speaker of all the language varieties.

Second, couples' conversation is usually prone to anecdotalism, which refers to the appeal to a few telling examples of the apparent phenomenon without analysing contradictory data as Ingrid Piller (2002) indicates. It is not possible to eliminate the influences on participants' awareness of being recorded, and the validity of their self-report on the questionnaire regarding their perception of disagreement. Naturally occurring conversations might not be natural at all. Participants perform and select what they prefer to be heard. As exemplified by the Russian husband, Vladimir's confession *because in front of a recorder, I want to sound more s-, I want you to sound stupid*. I have made every effort to control this problem through using interactional

sociolinguistics analysis and describing the corpus in detail. Access to good-quality spontaneous interaction is not always easy. Concerning the method of data collection, the option of video-taping by participants themselves might also be used.

I have focused on a number of specific discourse strategies observed in the data. To further investigate multilingual couples' interaction in disagreement, researchers need to explore further how other means might be employed for mitigating or aggravating oppositions in future work. For instance, in my corpus, the power relationship between parents and children does not affect the intervention carried out by their child. DM *well* is the only token discussed in my disagreement data, and it is irrelevant for couples who do not use English in their communication at all, because *well* will not occur in the interaction. Other discourse markers in different languages to show speakers' evaluations of their interlocutors and their actions need to be included. Lastly, this thesis provides some insight into sociolinguistic explorations of oppositional stance. Stancetaking theory can be used as scaffoldings for further research on dialogical interaction in sociocultural life and language use in actual discourse.

All in all, from a close inspection of multilingual couples' conversations in disagreement, it emerges that the participants are performing intimacy at a number of levels. As the corpus shows, the participants do disagree with each other in daily conversation frequently, and the most common closing is to end without resolution during disagreement. The fact that multilingual couples readily have more strategies available to cope with the disagreement repertoire allows them to maintain their oppositional stances without damaging the intimacy.

Appendix : Questionnaire 個人資料

1.	Gender 性別	Male 男			Female 女		
2.	Age 年齡	<26	26-30	31-35	36-40	>40	
3.	Year of Education 教育年限	<12	13-16	17-19	>=20		
4.	Occupation 職業	Full-time employed 職員	Full-time student 學生	Housewife / Househusband 家管	Other (please specify) 其他(請註明)		
5.	Country of Origin 原籍國家						
6.	First language(s) 母語(複數可)						
7.	Length of Stay in TW/UK 居住時間	<1year	1-3years	3-5years	5-10 years	>10years	
8.	Languages learned 其他語言	English 英語	Mandarin 中文	French 法文	Spanish 西班牙語	German 德語	
		Southern Min/ Taiwanese 閩南語	Japanese 日文	Other (please specify) 其他 (請註明)			
9.	Languages that your father can speak 父親會說的語言有哪些						
10.	Languages that your mother can speak 母親會說的語言有哪些						
11.	How long have you been together with your partner? 倆人成為伴侶至今多久						
	<1year	1-3years	3-5years	5-10 years	>10years		
12.	Which languages do you use to communicate with your the other half? 倆人通常使用的語言為何						
	English 英語	Chinese 中文	Mix (please specify) 混合使用(請註明)	other(please specify)			
13.	How long have you learned your partner's mother tongue? 你學過對方母語的時間長度為						
	Not yet 沒學過	Pick up occasionally 從生活中學會一點	3-6months 三至六個月	6months -1year 半年至一年	1-3years 一至三年	>3years 三年以上	

14	Did you start learning that language before or after you met your partner? 承上，若你學過該語言，是在遇見你的另一半之前或之後					
	Before we met 之前			After we met 之後		
15	Which languages do you speak to your parents in law? 你跟你的公婆或岳父岳母溝通時，所使用的語言為何					
16	Number of children 幾個小孩	None 無	1	2	3	>3
17	Which languages do you speak to your child if any? 若有小孩，請問你跟孩子以何種語言溝通					
18	How different do you feel when you argue in other language compared to your first language? 你在使用非母語來爭辯時的感受，跟使用母語相較，會覺得					
	Very weak 很無力	Weaker 較無力	No difference 沒有不同	Stronger 比較強勢	Much stronger 非常強勢	
19	How do you perceive when your partner uses his/her mother tongue in dispute? 夫妻意見不合時，若你的另一半使用他/她的母語來爭執，你會覺得					
	Insulted 受傷	Funny 有趣	Curious 好奇	Aggressive 受到攻擊	Calmer 較平靜	Other (please specify) 其他(請註明)
20	Your identity 個人認同					
	British 英國人	Taiwanese 台灣人	Chinese from Taiwan 中國人但來自台灣	Dual nationalities (please specify) 雙重身份 (請註明)	Other (please specify) 其他 (請註明)	

## Appendix : Couples' Profile

### UK

#### 1. Andy and Pisces

Andy and Pisces have known each other since high school and they moved to the UK ten years ago due to Andy's job arrangement. At the time of the data collection, both Andy and Pisces were 38 years old. Andy is originally from South Africa where he met his Taiwanese wife. Pisces immigrated to South Africa in her teens and lived there for more than 10 years. The wife has a master's degree and the husband holds a bachelor's degree. Pisces is a housewife and Andy works at a clinic. Andy grew up bilingually in Afrikaans and English, and he had taken Chinese courses at college for one year. Andy and Pisces are both highly fluent in English and Chinese. This couple have a six year old son and twin daughters aged two. They attempt to raise the three children bilingually. It is interesting to note that it is Andy who insists they have to use Chinese to communicate with their children. If they are talking to each other only, the language choice is English. There are many instances of code switching during the forty-five minute long recording at the dining table where their children were present. The couple is introduced to me through an acquaintance who participated in the pilot study.

Their perceptions of language use in disagreement are different. Andy perceives that he is in serious trouble when his wife switches to Hokkien in discord. Pisces thinks it is perfectly normal for her husband to use English to disagree, but she feels "*I can't get to the point in one phrase*" when she uses her L2 in disagreement. As far as

national identity is concerned, Andy's answer is South African and Pisces considers herself a Taiwanese national.

## 2. Elko and Winnie

Elko is a Dutch national and he met his Taiwanese wife, Winnie, when they both worked for the same company in the Netherlands. He is an IT professional. Elko was 47 and Winnie was 52 years old when they participated in the research. This couple also immigrated to UK due to their work thirteen years ago. The couple is introduced to me by a member of the European-Taiwanese Family Association. Winnie possesses a master's degree whereas Elko's educational level is college. Elko's father speaks German and Dutch, and his mother speaks Dutch and a little English. Elko learned German, English and French at school. Although he has also learned Chinese for one year, he is not confident speaking Mandarin. He indicated that he mainly relies on body language to communicate with his parents in law. On the other hand, the languages Winnie speaks are English and Spanish. Her father speaks Chinese and Japanese and her mother is a Chinese monolingual. English is the language Winnie uses to communicate with Elko's parents, in addition to Elko's help of translation into Dutch. Winnie has two children from previous marriage, but Elko and Winnie do not have any. Their perceptions of disagreement are the opposite. The husband refuses to admit it so he wrote "*we do not argue*", and the wife added "*we fight*". If she hears him speaking Dutch, she will respond in Chinese. Elko feels excluded when Winnie uses Chinese. Elko identifies himself as Dutch and Winnie's answer for national identity is Taiwanese. The couple recorded one hour of conversation when they took their dog for a walk.

### 3. George and Ingrid

Ingrid moved to England right after she got married, which was one and half years before they participated in the research. Her parents speak Hokkien and Mandarin Chinese. Ingrid grew up speaking Mandarin-Hokkien bilingually, and has learned Japanese and English at school, so she is fluent in all four languages. Both Ingrid and George possess a bachelor's degree. George's mother speaks English and French and his father is an English monolingual. He picked up some Chinese from his wife and he feels more comfortable speaking it when they visit Taiwan and when he talks to his parent in law through Skype<sup>1</sup>. George was 45 and Ingrid was 44 at the time of data collection. George is self-employed as a garden designer whereas Ingrid works part-time at a local bakery.

As for perception of disagreement, George feels Taiwanese people are always shouting. Ingrid feels disadvantaged when she has to use English to argue. Her identification is Taiwanese. Interestingly, in addition to his own identity - British, George adds one line "*I forget my wife is Taiwanese*".

### 4. Gregoire and Sophie

Gregoire is from France and he came to the UK to study eight years ago. It is the same reason Sophie came to England. The husband's parents are both French monolingual. Apart from his mother tongue, Gregoire can speak English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and some Chinese. Sophie grew up bilingually speaking

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<sup>1</sup> Skype is a software application over the Internet, which can be used to talk with viewing by webcam. (Oxford English dictionaries online)



Hokkien and Mandarin Chinese, which are the languages her parents speak. She has learned English and French at school. She does not speak French frequently because she only learned French for half a year. This couple use English as a lingua franca given that English is the language they have spoken since they first met in college. Both of them obtained a PhD degree in UK and now work as researcher/ lecturers. They were introduced to me by a colleague from Taiwan who was doing a PhD at the same college where Sophie works. Their identities are based on the country where they are from. Gregoire and Sophie were in their early 30's when they participated in the research. They recorded their discussion of the preparations for having their twin babies at the hospital when the wife was waiting to have a C-section. There is no code switching recorded during their one hour discussion. His Chinese is limited as he picks up the words occasionally from Sophie. The couple use a blackboard at home to communicate when Gregoire does not feel like talking after work occasionally on week days. In this case, Sophie will write down some notes on the blackboard as a reminder and discuss with Gregoire during the weekend. They consider it as a way to avoid disagreement.

## 5. Hamish and Ruby

Hamish and Ruby met each other at a French language class and have been together for one and a half years. Hamish is an Irish national and was about to finish his PhD when they recorded the conversations. He was 28 and Ruby was 25 at that time. Ruby has a master's degree and has a full time job at the Taiwanese Representative Office. Ruby contacted me actively after she saw my post on the forum. Hamish had been in the UK for over four years and it was Ruby's second year in the country. Hamish's mother speaks English and Gaelic, and his father is English monolingual. Hamish had

grew up as a monolingual and wished he had learned Gaelic. He learned French, and Japanese, and picked up some Mandarin and Hokkien from Ruby. One year after the recording, Hamish and Ruby got married and Hamish also started taking Chinese courses in a language centre. Ruby's parents speak Hokkien and Mandarin Chinese, and she was raised bilingually. Ruby describes Hamish as mainly monolingual with some knowledge of Chinese but *“likes to pronounce everything into Italian”*. Hamish does not know the reason why, but he prefers to speak French in an Italian way because he likes the Italian language. Hamish thinks he has learnt how to resolve problems in a more diplomatic way as opposed to just losing his temper after he was with Ruby. *“When she goes quiet, I know something is wrong”*. Ruby admits there is little chance she can win, so she does not argue in English often, but will physically give him a punch if she is annoyed. She is aware that she sometimes switches to Chinese during disagreement.

## 6. Howard and Tiffany

Tiffany met Howard through work and they have been a couple for six years. Tiffany came to England to study landscape design seven years ago and is now working as a designer. Howard was taking courses in 3D animation at the time of data collection. Tiffany's parents are Chinese monolinguals, but she grew up bilingual in Mandarin and Hokkien. Howard is the opposite. His parents can speak English and French, but he grew up monolingual. He has picked up some Chinese from Tiffany and uses English to talk to her family. He has British nationality, but he leaves a question mark on his identity. Tiffany identifies herself as a Taiwanese lady living in London, and coins the term “Twinglish” for herself. Both Howard and Tiffany were in their mid 30's, and they both possess a master's degree. They communicate in English and there

was no code switching during the recording. They both think arguing in English or another language makes no difference. Howard considers it silly if Tiffany uses Chinese during discord, “*as we don't understand each other*”. This couple was introduced to me by a friend of mine.

## 7. Ken and Fanny

British husband, Ken was 40 and his Taiwanese wife, Fanny was 50 when they participated in the project. They are highly educated as the husband has a PhD and the wife has a master's degree. Ken is a senior lecture at university, and Fanny has a full time job. The couple was introduced to the researcher by a colleague of mine on Taiwanese Sports Day. Ken has lived in China for two years with his parents and also lived in Taiwan for seven years; thus he is fluent in Chinese. Fanny's father speaks Chinese and English, and her mother speaks Mandarin, Hokkien and Shanghainese. She grew up bilingual in Mandarin and Hokkien. The couple have a fourteen year old son and they have raised him bilingually in Chinese and English.

Ken feels “*both British and Taiwanese*” when it comes to national identity, whereas Fanny uses “*Taiwanese and British*” for her answer. Despite the couple sharing dual identities, it is noteworthy that the sequence is the opposite. Fanny puts Taiwanese first and Ken chooses to write British before the other one. Both of them reply they “*never argue*”, but it is normal and natural if they do on the questionnaire. Their language code is a mix of Chinese and English.

## 8. Steven and Gina

Steven and Gina had been lived in Taiwan for nine years before they moved to the UK. Therefore, Steven is fluent both in Chinese and English, and so is Gina. The husband is a British national and the wife is from Taiwan. They have been together for nearly two decades, and tend to tease each other often in their disagreements. Steven and Gina were at their late 40's with two children. Their eldest daughter was about to go to college and the youngest son was 11 years old. Their conversation was recorded at the dining table with their son, and their house was under renovation at that time. This couple' education is at college level. Their language choice is Chinese and English and a great deal of code switching occurs in their conversation. This couple was introduced by a member of the European-Taiwanese Family Association at a concert.

## 9. Tom and Cindy

Tom has British nationality and Cindy is from Taiwan. The husband was in his early 40's and the wife was 39 when they participated in the research. They were finishing their PhDs at that time. Ingrid came to the UK to study and they met when she was doing a part time job at university. Tom has studied Chinese for ten years, but is still not confident in speaking the language. He was undertaking Chinese lessons once a week, but preferred to speak English with his wife. His reason for learning Chinese is for better understanding of Cindy's culture, and also for their child in the future, as he does not want to feel left out when his wife talks to their child in her mother tongue. He uses English to talk to his parents in law with Cindy's translating into Chinese. This couple use English at all times, including when they disagree with each other. Tom does not think argument has ever happened in their conversation. Cindy says

they seldom argue but sometimes she feels incapable of expressing herself in full despite her high proficiency in English.

It is interesting to note that both Cindy and Tom describe their identity status as their own nationality plus a certain extent of their spouse's. According to Tom's description, it is *"I can identify myself with Taiwan for being an independent state. However, I can't quite agree with some aspects of Taiwanese people's life"*. Cindy wrote *"I guess I've developed a degree of British identity from daily life"*.

#### 10. Tony and Maria

Tony and Maria are the only couple in the UK where the husband is from Taiwan. Maria is half Taiwanese, half Italian but her national identity is Italian. She was born in Italy and grew up in Taiwan. Tony identifies himself as Taiwanese. The wife possesses a bachelor degree. She went back to Italy to learn the language with family from her father's side in her early 20's. Her father spoke Italian and a little English. Her mother is fluent in Mandarin, Hokkien, Italian and English. The husband was 36 and the wife was 38 when the research was carried out. Tony and Maria relocation to the UK initiated by his PhD career and they had stayed in UK for 3 years. Maria is a full time employee and English is the language she uses for work. Tony's parents are Chinese-Hokkien bilingual, and his father studied in Japan, so he is also fluent in Japanese. Tony learned Japanese at school and has picked some Italian from his wife. Their language pattern is interesting as the wife uses English and the husband uses Chinese, but both Tony and Maria code-switch between Chinese and English in their conversation. If he hears her speaking Italian to argue, he will reply in Japanese, the third language he is fluent in. for example, when Maria says *"buon appetito"* (good

appetite) in Italian, Tony will respond “いただきます” in Japanese (start eating). The two terms are gratitude manners before meals in different cultures. During the interview, the wife switched to English if she was upset, whereas the main language used for the interview was Chinese. Maria is aware that she prefers to argue in English even though Chinese is one of her first languages. When referring to her husband to the researcher, she used his Chinese name, but she called him by his English name when directly talking to him, especially during disagreement.

One example the couple shared about their cultural difference is regarding their table manners. After Maria prepared the food and served the dishes on the table, Tony was used to the Chinese convention which is to take some from each dish at the same time. Maria stopped him by saying “*that is the second course*”. She expected him to follow the Italian rules of etiquette which is to eat the starter first, main dish second and dessert last. Maria would become very upset if Tony mixed up the order.

## *Taiwan*

### 11. Ali and Chin

Ali and Chin have been a couple for nearly five years. Ali identifies himself as an American national and Chin's identity is Taiwanese. The couple are both in their mid 30's, and have lived in Taiwan for two years. Before they moved back to Taiwan, Ali and Chin had stayed in the UK while Ali was working on his master's degree. Chin owns a bachelor degree. They recorded a one hour conversation during an afternoon break on the weekend. At the time they recorded the conversation, they were planning to move to the United States to live with Ali's parents.

Ali's father speaks Farsi and English, and his mother is an English monolingual. Ali's Chinese is highly proficient, since he learned Chinese and stayed in China for a few years. He can also speak French. Chin's parents are trilingual in Mandarin, Hokkien, and Japanese. She grew up bilingual in Mandarin and Hokkien. Her English proficiency is at intermediate level and makes grammatical mistakes from time to time. Their language choice has been Chinese since they met, with some switches to English. Ali feels weaker when he argues in Chinese as he cannot fully express himself. Likewise, Chin admits that sometimes she has difficulty understanding her husband when he argues in his first language.

### 12. Eirik and Sally

Eirik was 59 and Sally was 50 when they participated in this project. The couple are personal friends of mine. Sally worked fulltime at a library and Eirik was a part time

translator and language teacher but he described himself as a househusband. Eirik had spent several years in Taiwan during his childhood with his parents who were missionaries at that time. His parents spoke Norwegian, English, German, and Chinese. Sally was one of Eirik's father's patients when she was a child. They did not remember each other until Sally and Eirik met again in Germany when she obtained her master's degree. It is Eirik's second marriage. He has three children from the first one and Sally and he do not have any. Eirik is Norwegian, and he is a multilingual in a number of languages. In addition to the four languages his parents spoke, he also learned French, Danish, Icelandic, and Swedish. Sally was brought up bilingually in Hakka and Chinese. She picked up Holo and learned English, French, and German in school. The language they use is a mix of Chinese and German as lingua franca, with some English at other times.

Eirik feels exhausted when his wife argues in Chinese despite the fact that he is highly proficient in this language. On the other hand, Sally thinks it is funny to hear her husband speak Norwegian in their discord. Interestingly, Sally's answer on the questionnaire about her identity differs from other Taiwanese participants. She described herself as a "banana", with yellow skin but white soul. She uses the term 'global citizen' for her identity. The length of their conversation was 4 hours and 20 minutes in total within one week.

### 13. Fabrice and Kate

Fabrice is from France and he speaks French, English, and Spanish. His parents speak French and English. He was a full time student and just started taking Chinese courses for six months at that time. Kate was 8 month pregnant when they participated in the



research. Kate and Fabrice are in their late 30's and they have been together for 3 years. The couple's education is at university level. Kate grew up bilingually in Hokkien and Mandarin Chinese. Her parents are trilingual in Hokkien, Mandarin, and Japanese. She learned English in school and picked up some French from her husband. Although their English proficiency is at low intermediate level, the couple choose English as a lingua franca to communicate, since none of them could use the other's L1 fluently. Lots of grammatical mistakes were found in the recording, which does not seem to impact their communication. If the husband has difficulty expressing the word in English, or his wife did not seem to understand, he used mimicking sounds. He also gabbles in his L1. Mostly they talked in English, but switched to French and Chinese words in between. For instance, when the wife could not find a word in English, she switched back to Chinese. Also when she gave compliments to Fabrice, and described a lovely dog, she used Chinese.

According to Kate, she usually keeps silent when Fabrice argues in French and she does not mind him expressing himself in his first language. Fabrice's Chinese was not good enough to argue with his wife, and he stated on the questionnaire that he has never experienced his partner speaking Chinese during disagreement.

#### 14. Henry and Ayi

The couple are in their late 30's and are introduced to me by the researcher's brother. Ayi owned a café in my neighbourhood and Henry was working fulltime at a factory. The wife's education is secondary school and the husband's is at college level. Henry's father was an immigrant from Fujian province of China and his mother was half Spaniard, half Filipino. His father speaks Hokkien, Mandarin, and a little English

whereas his mother speaks Tagalog, English, and a little Spanish. Henry was born in the Philippines and moved to Taiwan at the age of nineteen. He grew up trilingual in Tagalog, Hokkien and English. He went to Chinese complementary school to learn Chinese for ten years. His knowledge of Spanish is limited. Ayi's parents were from Guangdong province of China. They spoke Cantonese, Hakka, Mandarin, and Hokkien. She had some knowledge of Cantonese and Hakka, and learned English in schools, but was far from good at it. She picked up Hokkien after she got married. The couple mainly communicated in Chinese and that was also the language they spoke to their two daughters.

During the disagreement, if Ayi heard Henry use English or Hokkien, she was amused and she could not express herself in full in any other language than her L1. Henry's perception was he felt disadvantaged when he uses Chinese to argue. Ayi had a clear identity of being Taiwanese whereas Henry stated "*I don't know*" for his identity in the questionnaire.

#### 15. John and Olivia

John was in his late 20's and Olivia was in her early 30's. They have been a couple for four years. They were introduced to me through a friend of mine. The couple met in England when Olivia was doing her PhD. John possesses a master's degree and he works as a lecturer in Taiwan. John and Olivia had moved to Taiwan for one and a half years and that was when John began learning Chinese. John's parents are English monolinguals. He speaks German and Italian in addition to his mother tongue, English. Olivia's parents are bilingual in Mandarin and Hokkien, but she grew up monolingual in Mandarin. She learned English at school. John and Olivia communicate in English.

They did not have children at that time.

According to Olivia, it took longer to react in a foreign language when she argued and she usually asked her husband to slow down in disputes. John stated that he knows his wife feels stressed as she cannot express her opinions and for him, it is more aggressive when he hears Olivia arguing in Chinese. John changed the option of identity from British to English and he provided the reason below: *'I don't like to say British because they don't take into account being Scottish Welsh or Irish'*. The couple recorded one hour of conversation in a restaurant where they had dinner.

#### 16. Kimura and Tina

Kimura is an academic and Tina works at the same university. Tina possesses a master's degree from the Netherlands. Tina was introduced to me through NESO. They were both in their 40's when the data was collected. They have one son and a daughter and attempt to raise them bilingually in Chinese and Japanese. Kimura's parents are Japanese monolinguals. Kimura himself can speak fluently in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean. Tina grew up in a bilingual family where her parents spoke Hokkien and Mandarin. Her English proficiency is high and she has taken Japanese courses for three years after they met. They have been a couple for longer than a decade. Their language choice is mainly Chinese but they switch to Japanese frequently, particularly when their children are around. They tended to record the conversations during dinner time with their son and daughter.

As for the perception of argument, Kimura's reply was a moderate expression *'it is alright'*, both for his feeling of arguing in a foreign language and when his wife

disagreed in Chinese. On the other hand, Tina stated “*there is no chance to argue in Japanese*” for them. Their answers for national identity are Japanese and Taiwanese respectively.

#### 17. Monsoekser and Fiona

The couple are in their 40's and have one son aged seven. Monsoekser came from Nigeria eight years ago and he acquired Chinese after he moved to Taiwan. He grew up bilingually in Igbo and English which are the same languages his parents speak. Fiona's mother passed away when she was young. Her father's first language is Hokkien and he only knows little Mandarin. Therefore, Fiona had to translate for her husband when he spoke to her father. Fiona was brought up speaking Hokkien and Mandarin and learned English and Japanese in school.

Monsoekser felt frustrated when his wife argued in Chinese and disadvantaged by the language barrier when he expressed himself. Fiona has never picked up any Igbo and she thinks it is not a big deal if she cannot understand, as that was the language her husband used between him and his Nigerian friends. They communicate in Chinese. The length of conversation recorded is one hour. Monsoekser mentioned an interesting point on the questionnaire that the “*Taiwanese government asked someone to give up his/her the other passport to get a Taiwanese one*” and he did not want to abandon his Nigerian identification.

#### 18. Paola and Bjorn

Paola and Bjorn are the second couple where the husband is from Taiwan and the wife

is from a foreign country (Uruguay). Paola was in her mid 30's and Bjorn was in his early 40's and their education level is secondary high school. They have been married more than a decade and have two sons. Bjorn had worked as a cook in Uruguay for twenty years and that was how they met each other. They moved back to Taiwan sixteen years ago. Paola's mother tongue is Spanish and she acquired Chinese after she married. Her mother speaks Portuguese and her father speaks Spanish. Bjorn grew up speaking both Hokkien and Mandarin and learned Spanish when he started his business in Uruguay in his late teens. Paola and Bjorn's language choice is Chinese with some Spanish words in between. The length of the conversation recorded was three weeks. Both of them stated that there is no difference to argue in a foreign language and it is funny to hear the other switching to his or her mother tongue. Paola thinks she has dual identities, which are Uruguayan and Taiwanese national, whereas Bjorn's national identity is Taiwanese. Paola was a regular guest for a talk show on television, and this couple was introduced by a friend who worked at the television station.

#### 19. Saied and Zoe

Saied was originally from Pakistan and came to Taiwan as an overseas student. He was in his early 40's, and Zoe was in her late 30's. They have been together for more than five years and have a new born baby and one elder son. They both have college/university degrees. Zoe was a housewife and Saied was working part time for different kinds of jobs and had just received his Taiwanese identity card. At the time they participated in the project, the couple had just moved to a new place and were considering separating. The couple recorded their conversation for several weeks and this was the only case recorded when participants were crying and there was heated

disagreement.

Saied's first languages are Urdu and a local Pakistani dialect. He also learned English and is fluent in Mandarin Chinese. His father speaks Urdu, English, Dari, and Pakistani dialect and his mother only speaks the local dialect in Pakistan. Zoe acquired Hokkien and Mandarin bilingually when she was growing up. They mainly use Chinese to communicate but Saied was found to gabble and talked to his baby son in Urdu. Zoe also switched to Hokkien occasionally.

The wife did the recording without her husband's knowledge at the moment, although he had been informed about participating in the research. Zoe reported she would get angry if Saied switched to Urdu when they argued and thought that was his way to avoid any discussion. Saied always wanted Zoe to learn Urdu and felt frustrated because his wife couldn't speak his mother tongue. He still thinks he cannot express himself completely when speaking Chinese. Saied had to renounce his Pakistani nationality to get a Taiwanese identity card, and he felt like he did not belong to any country and lost his identity. Zoe was introduced to me by her sister who is a friend of mine.

## 20. Steven and Judith

Steven is Canadian national in his 40's and his wife, Judith is in her early 30's. They are both high school teachers. This couple was introduced by my neighbour who is the wife's student. They have been a couple for a decade and have three children. Steven's father speaks English and German, and his mother is an English monolingual. He is fluent in Chinese. Judith was raised bilingually in Hokkien and Mandarin which

are her parents' first languages. Their language choice is Chinese.

Steven feels disadvantaged when arguing in Chinese but enjoys short disagreements. He described arguing in one's first language as "*fair. I think if we both resort to our mother tongues, it is time for a cooling period*". Judith's high proficiency in English does not prevent her from frustration when expressing herself. She thinks it is perfectly normal for her husband to switch to English in argument as he always expresses his opinions in his mother tongue, although she feels embarrassed if she fails to understand him. Their conversation was recorded when they were watching a film.

## 21. Vladimir and Jenny

Vladimir was in his late 30's and Jenny was in her mid 30's at the time of data collection. They have been a couple for three years. Vladimir's parents speak Russian only. He acquired different languages in the countries where he stayed, so he can speak seven languages at various levels. The length of his stay in Taiwan was nine years. He was a fulltime employee and Jenny was teaching English at a kindergarten. She grew up bilingually speaking Hokkien and Mandarin which are the languages her parents speak. The wife is a friend of mine. Two conversations were recorded: one discussion about a television program they were watching and the other was when they were playing word puzzle games on the mobile phone.

The couple use English as a lingua franca to communicate. Jenny switched to Mandarin when she expressed her feelings and thoughts albeit their conversation was mostly in English. Vladimir replied in Chinese very now and then. The husband

thinks arguing in English (L3) is more mild and diplomatic. Vladimir admitted that he had left Russia too long and does not belong to it anymore, but he will never be Chinese. Therefore he is a person with “*no identity*”.



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